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Santa Barbara

Fathering Ideals: The Meanings of Latino Men's Involved Fatherhoods

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

by

Fatima Suarez

Committee in charge:

Professor Denise Segura, Chair

Professor Verta Taylor

Professor Beth Schneider

Professor Tristan Bridges

September 2021

The dissertation of Fatima Suarez is approved.

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Denise Segura, Committee Chair

May 2021

Fathering Ideals: The Meanings of Latino Men's Involved Fatherhoods

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by

Fatima Suarez

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though the roughest parts of graduate school. *Verta, thank you for caring about me.* I would also like to thank Beth Schneider who agreed to be a part of my committee during a time when I needed someone in my corner the most. *Beth, thank you for being there for me.* I thank Tristan Bridges who introduced me to the field of masculinities research. He carefully read every essay I sent his way and helped me improve the quality of my writing. With his support, I became more confident in my voice. *Tristan, thank you for helping me find the joy in writing.* I am also grateful for Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo who read every chapter and provided valuable and insightful comments that promoted me to examine my assumptions and premises in effort to tell a more textured and richer story about Latino men. Her guidance is indispensable. *Pierrette, thank you for encouraging my intellectual growth.*

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I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Marcos Suárez and
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who raised their children in the best ways they knew how

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ABSTRACT

Fathering Ideals: The Meanings of Latino Men's Involved Fatherhoods

by

Fatima Suarez

What are the social forces that shape, sustain, and undermine involved fathering for Latino men? My dissertation, *Fathering Ideals: The Meanings of Latino Involved Fatherhoods*, generates new knowledge on Latino men, fatherhood, and masculinities using an intersectionalities perspective. My study also considers how Latino fathers enact fatherhood, monitor one another's fatherhoods, and understand the emotional labor of fathering. Drawing upon 60 in-depth interviews with Latino fathers living in California, I pinpoint an emerging fatherhood ideal to which Latino fathers in my study subscribe. These "ideal" characteristics reflect the larger ideals about involved fathering and emphasize the transmission of cultural values and practices including: balancing work and family, not having "too many" kids, being active in their children's lives (especially their education), being attentive to their children's mental health, being emotionally expressive and accessible, having greater communication with their families, incorporating Spanish and other Latina/o cultural traditions, and using alternative methods of discipline. The majority of fathers, however, cannot successfully achieve this new ideal due to structural impediments. Consequently, Latino fathers employ diverse, class-specific, strategies to try to accomplish an idealized classed notion of fatherhood.

Overall, my study traces the effects of work and employment, the social construction of childhood, their relationships with their own fathers, and the institution of motherhood on Latino men's involved fathering. Paid work and employment enables Latino fathers to be good providers, but detracts from accomplishing their fathering ideals. The majority of participants realize that work also prevented them from getting to know their own fathers in a deep, intimate way. This realization drives those able (mostly college-educated, professional, Latino fathers) to adjust their work commitments or schedules to make time for their families. Additionally, many men in my study perceived that they were denied a childhood, an issue that compels Latino fathers to value the "pricelessness" of their children. There is tension, however, between Latino fathers' desires to give their children a "normal" childhood alongside fears of spoiling their children. I theorize their attempts to negotiate this tension as the *concerted cultivation of natural growth* (a racialized and classed parenting practice and ideology). Moreover, Latino fathers are forced to reevaluate their own fathers in light of changing cultural ideologies. Their reevaluations of their own fathers, and other father figures, expose a continuum between two extremes: reverence and resentment. Nuanced expressions of idolization and hatred, fulfillment and longing, *respeto* (respect) and indifference, forgiveness and condemnation exist and they change over the life course. Lastly, by examining men's experiences of childbirth and custody hearings, I argue that the naturalization of motherhood drives these fathers to frame fatherhood as "work." Consequently, the meanings that fathers attach to fatherhood are shaped by their beliefs about whether they can be as competent in caregiving as they perceive mothers to be.

My research agenda considers contemporary practices and ideologies of fatherhood among Latino men and reflects the intricacies of inequality in family life. Considering the differences and similarities in how Latino men conceptualize and practice fatherhood, this study

dispels prior notions of a unitary Latino father subject essential to researchers and policymakers interested in the role of fathers in the well-being of families. The results of this study contribute to the fields of gender studies, family studies, Latina/o sociology, social psychology, education, and Chicana/o studies.

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Preface Fathering in Times of Crisis

The year is 2020 and the summer season has arrived. The sun is shining brightly and the skies above Goleta, California are clear. The slight ocean breeze makes the leaves of the eucalyptus trees outside my window move in a slow rhythm. It is the first time in over a week that the town wakes up to a bright morning. “June Gloom” has been particularly harsh this year. It is 10 o’clock on a Friday morning and I am sitting at my desk, ready to write the introduction. I defended my dissertation proposal two years ago and it is unbelievable that I am now writing the last chapter of my dissertation. Although I have been analytically reflecting on my respondents’ narratives throughout my writing over the past seven months, most recently, I have been concerned about their well-being and how they and their families are surviving the calamity of a global pandemic.

The global health crisis known as COVID-19 has ravaged all semblance of normalcy, unleashing social, economic, and political turmoil in the process. On March 19, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom issued a state-wide “shelter-in-place” order, effectively closing all “non-essential” businesses (e.g., restaurants, cinemas, retail stores), public parks, and schools to prevent overwhelming the state’s already unstable healthcare system (Koran 2020c). Although the state has slowly allowed some of these locales to safely reopen starting in early June, Governor Newsom recently halted this process due to the increasing number of confirmed cases and hospitalizations (Chappell 2020). Alas, California’s success in “flattening the curve” was short-lived. The consequences of this pandemic are numerous: 6,263 people have died; about 248,000 people have contracted the virus; California’s unemployment rate rose to 15.5 percent; state fiscal analysts project a revenue decline of 22.3 percent and a 54.3 billion shortfall; and schools closed which placed an added burden on families who relied on them for child care and

meals to feed their children (Abad-Santos 2020; California Department of Public Health 2020a; Employment Development Department 2020; Hinkley 2020). The pandemic has exacerbated existing social inequalities. For instance, Latinas/os account for almost 39 percent of the California state population, yet they account for almost 56 percent of COVID-19 cases and 42 percent of deaths (California Department of Public Health 2020b).

At the same time, there is a racism pandemic. Along with the devastation of a global health crisis, police brutality against Blacks and Latinas/os continues. The murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Department on May 25, 2020 engendered a series of protests across the nation against police violence towards Black people and structural racism and demanding the defunding of police departments. Despite the growing national awareness and condemnation of police brutality, the killings have not stopped. On June 2, 2020, Vallejo Police shot and killed 22-year-old Sean Monterrosa even though he was unarmed and not resisting arrest. Two days later, on June 4, 2020, California Highway Patrol Officers in Oakland killed 23-year-old Erik Salgado after they stopped him on the suspicion that he was driving a stolen vehicle. They also injured his pregnant girlfriend who was in the car with him and who later suffered a miscarriage. In a three-year-span, Latinas/os in California represented 46 percent of deadly police shootings, second to the rates of Blacks (Koran 2020a).

How are the sixty Latino men who shared their stories with me making sense of this current moment? How are they coping with the challenges we are facing? How are they raising their families in these uncertain times? When California's restaurants first closed, I immediately thought about Rodrigo. Rodrigo is a 32-year-old Mexican immigrant father from the northern state of Sinaloa in Mexico. When I met Rodrigo, he was living in a two-bedroom apartment with six other people in San Jose, California. He was also working as a dishwasher at two different

restaurants. He arrived in the United States only a few months prior to our meeting and was ambivalent about his plans to return to Mexico. Leaving his wife and two daughters behind, Rodrigo migrated to the United States in search of work. He had managed to save some money, but was unsure whether he had saved enough to return to Mexico, especially since it is becoming increasingly costly and dangerous cross the U.S.-Mexico border. I constantly thought, *how is he doing? Is he still in San Jose? Did he return to Mexico?* One of the restaurants where he worked recently reopened and when I inquired about his whereabouts, no one knew. He had not returned with the rest of the staff to work at the restaurant. Rodrigo was gone.

I was also concerned about Angel, Carlos and many other respondents whose stories are included in this manuscript because of their legal status. As undocumented workers, they do not qualify for federal relief through the CARES Act (Naera 2020). *¿Como les estan dando de comer a sus familias? ¿Como estan pagando la renta?* (How are they feeding their families? How are they paying the rent?). Although California passed its own relief bill to support undocumented immigrants in their families, the state bill is not comparable to the federal bill nor does it address the larger structure of inequality that marginalizes immigrants (Koran 2020b).

Social research is not detached from the social-political context in which it takes place. It is important to acknowledge the social conditions under which social research is produced and how these might affect the analysis. I include this preface in order to situate my analysis and to point to the growing importance of understanding how parents (in this particular case, fathers) are raising their families in spite of the social, economic, and political uncertainty that characterizes contemporary U.S. society. Not acknowledging the social, economic, and political circumstances of this work would be insincere. We are at a critical juncture in U.S. history and

the direction we choose take will define us. It is at this juncture where this current study on Latino fatherhood takes place.

I. Introduction: Where are the Latino Fathers?

In honor of Father's Day 2015, Huff Post Latino Voices asked their readers what it meant to have (or be) a Latino father in the present moment (Moreno 2015). Many of the readers characterized their fathers as "hardworking," "inspiring," "committed," "strong," "loving," and "willing to do anything for their kids." It is ironic, though, that this post was published just four days after Donald Trump attacked Mexicans, specifically Mexican immigrant men, by calling them criminals, rapists, and drug dealers in the speech where he announced his candidacy for the U.S. Presidency (Reilly 2016; Time 2015).

Public responses to Trump's disparaging comments were diverse. Civil Rights organizations like UnidosUS[1] focused on mobilizing the Latina/o voting bloc while media corporations such as Univision severed its business ties with the Trump Organization. Trump's depiction of Latino immigrant men as "bad hombres" (Rhodan 2016) problematized Latino men's masculinities, yet many responded by mobilizing discourses on responsible fatherhood in order to humanize Latino immigrant men (Cervantes 2017; Remezcla 2017). So, instead of critiquing U.S. immigration policy and the political-historical relationships between the United States and Latin America, people justified men's migration by claiming they are fulfilling the most basic social expectation of fathers, which is to financially provide. In other words, Latino immigrant men are not "bad hombres" who lurk in the shadows, committing crimes and putting U.S. residents at risk, they are "good fathers" who are willing to risk their lives to provide for the well-being of their families. This cultural phenomenon points to the importance of understanding

[1] Formerly known as the National Council for La Raza. In July 2017, the organization changed its name in order to foster unity among Latinas and Latinos and appeal to a younger generation (see Gamboa 2017).

contemporary meanings of Latino fatherhood and problematize fatherhood ideologies and practices from the vantage point of Latino men using an intersectionalities framework.

What does contemporary Latino fatherhood look like and how has it changed over time? What are the social forces that shape and sustain involved fathering for Latino men? Drawing upon 60 interviews with Latino fathers living in California, I examine how Latino men's involved fatherhood is shaped by historical processes such as modernity, capitalism, and neoliberalism which illuminate complexities in the intersections of age, class, and generation in the United States. I also interrogate how Latino men enact the meanings they attach to fatherhood; how Latino fathers monitor one another's fatherhoods; and how Latino fathers describe the emotional labor of fathering.

As I listened attentively to my participants, I noticed that they kept referring to an "old school" father ideal-type, which, many argued, characterized their fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other older men in their lives. Participants claimed that "back in the day," Latino fathers were exclusively financial providers who worked most of the time; held traditional gender, albeit sexist, attitudes about men and women's roles in the home; were harsh disciplinarians who used corporal punishment to reprimand their children (primarily their sons); drank a lot; were not emotionally expressive; and they did not say "I love you" to their children. Participants' narratives also suggest that this previous Latino father ideal-type is no longer desired or revered. Their reference to this previous ideal was to situate their own enactment of fatherhood as more progressive, involved, and humane and to document intergenerational social change. These new, emerging, contemporary defining characteristics of the ideal Latino father include: achieving a balance between work and family; not having too many kids; being an active participant in their children's lives, especially in their education; being attentive to their children's mental health;

being emotionally expressive and emotional-laden nurturers; having greater communication with their families; teaching their children Spanish and other Latina/o cultural traditions; and using alternative methods of discipline. A continuous characteristic, though, between the "old school" and "new school" Latino fatherhood was the cultural ethic of *respeto* (respect).

Despite their view of this "new" Latino fatherhood as "progressive" and more "equitable," the majority of participants relied on neoliberal discourses that held individual fathers accountable for not adhering to this new "modern" ideal without considering larger structural constraints, like work and employment. The thesis that I offer in this text is that there is a specific, current, dominant ideal of a "new" Latino father which is inspired by the larger (white) hegemonic "new fatherhood" ideal in U.S. society. The difference between these two dominant cultural values is that the "new" Latino father is one who also instills in his children a sense of cultural memory regarding their Latina/o heritage and historical memory of their family's intergenerational mobility.

Moreover, I use an intersectionalities approach, to capture the complexity and diversity that exists *among* Latino men– how the ideology and practice of fatherhood varies by ethnicity, class status, generation, education, and age. This theoretical approach, therefore, delivers a more nuanced conceptualization of Latino fatherhood. The majority of fathers cannot successfully achieve the new Latino father ideal due to structural impediments. Consequently, I also argue that various Latino *fatherhood class cultures* emerge as men try to navigate the structural and cultural landscapes that create and constrain their opportunities to accomplish an idealized classed notion of fatherhood. The existence of multiple fatherhood class cultures among Latino men lends me to use the plural form of fatherhood–*fatherhoods*–in this text. I also arrive at this

conclusion by conceptually approaching fatherhood as a set of *relations*.[2] The present study is situated in three areas of inquiry: family studies, gender studies, and Latina/o sociology.

The Families Studies Perspective

Fathering is a product of the meanings, beliefs, motivations, attitudes, and behaviors of those who are present in the lives of children. Contemporary discourses on fatherhood are contradictory. On one hand, some argue that contemporary fatherhood is in "crisis." On the organization's website, The National Fatherhood Initiative (2017) proclaims:

> There is a father absence crisis in America. According, to the U.S. Census Bureau, 24 million children, 1 out of 3, live without their biological father in the home. Consequently, there is a father factor in nearly all social ills facing America today.

This discourse invokes the dichotomy of the "involved" versus "absent" father and frames fatherlessness as a social and moral problem. In his book *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem*, David Blankenhorn, a founding member of the National Fatherhood Initiative, argues that fatherlessness in the United States is due to three phenomena. First, the gendered practices in the family have changed which resulted in "fewer things that remain socially defined as a father's distinctive work" (16). Second, fatherhood itself has been devalued because fathers have been "losing authority" in the home and in the wider society (ibid). Lastly, fatherhood has been diminished as "paternity has become decultured–denuded of any authoritative social content or definition" (ibid).

Blankenhorn's conceptualization of fatherhood is rooted in biological determinism. For him, biological fatherhood cannot be separated from social fatherhood, so if there is less

[2] A key contribution of this study is its approach to fatherhood. Most of the literature frames fatherhood as an achieved status (Cabrera *et al.* 2000; Marsiglio *et al.* 2000; Parke 2004; Roy 2014) or role (Lamb 1986). I conceptualize fatherhood as a set of relations in order to assess the ways in which male fathers are actively crafting fatherhood and the meanings that arise from this process.

emphasis on biological fatherhood, the result is a crisis in social fatherhood. Blankenhorn's analysis blames women and feminist gains in the workplace as negatively impacting families rather than critically engaging the changing structural arrangements that have rendered men unable to fulfill the traditional responsibilities associated with fatherhood. For example, fatherlessness can be a consequence of the increasing criminalization and incarceration of men of color, including Latinos, which prevents them from engaging in day-to-day caretaking and fathering of their children (Chui 2015; Swisher and Waller 2008).

David Popenoe (1996:2) has also contributed to the crisis discourse by calling fatherlessness a "human tragedy." Popenoe relies on evolutionary psychology and sex-role theory to argue for the significance of fatherhood. Furthermore, Popenoe privileges the ideal type of the traditional family which constitutes a married, heterosexual couple with children as the foundation of a good society. This privileging pathologizes different family arrangements and ignores the structural conditions that shape family formations.

Gillis (2000) argues, however, that this crisis is a *recurrent* theme in western, industrialized societies. "Post-patriarchal fatherhood" is the modern, middle class, invention of "the father-as-breadwinner," which attaches paternity to masculinity (226). For Gillis, the root of this "crisis" is not fatherhood itself, but the connection between masculinity and fatherhood. Contrary to the "crisis" discourse, others suggest the emergence of a "new fatherhood" where men are combining breadwinning with availability, engagement, and nurturing (Coltrane, Parke and Adams 2004; Edin and Nelson 2013; Miller 2011; Pinto and Coltrane 2009; Toth and Xu 1999). These contradictions exist in part because fatherhood is a historical phenomenon, and although biological fathers have always existed, *fatherhood* itself is a social and cultural

construct (Doherty *et al.* 1998; LaRossa 1997; Marsiglio *et al.* 2000; Parke 2004; Pleck and Pleck 1997).

Most of the families studies literature on fatherhood is premised on the notion that fathers are important for children's well-being and development. The current panic about absent fathers, which emerged in the 1990s, has led public figures, politicians, and academics to ask two questions: where are fathers and what types of policies will increase paternal involvement? These questions seem to indicate that the model of traditional fathering, which views fathers primarily as financial providers, is weakening (Gerson 2010; Risman 1998). Fathers are now expected to be highly involved and engaged with their children (Doherty *et al.* 1998; Levine and Pitt 1995; Marsiglio 1998; Pleck 1987; Toth and Xu 1999). Lamb *et al.* (1987) define involvement as the amount of time spent in activities involving a child, distinguishing three dimensions of father involvement: accessibility, engagement, and responsibility. Accessibility is based on fathers' presence and availability to their child. Engagement refers to the quality of fathers' interactions with their children and responsibility measures the fathers' monitoring of their children's daily activities.

Palkovitz (1997) expands the concept of paternal responsibility to differentiate the types of activities in which fathers and their children participate and between the quantity and quality of their care. From an ecological perspective, Doherty *et al.* (1998) argue that individual (e.g., fathers' social capital), interpersonal (e.g., co-parental relationship), and structural factors (e.g., employment opportunities) affect the context in which resident and non-resident fathers can practice "responsible fathering." Looking beyond structural and ecological factors, Cabrera *et al.* (2000:129) propose that "warmth, affect, sensitivity, and participation during specific engagements with children" are also important aspects of father involvement. Overall, research

indicates that fathers' emotional investment in, attachment to, and provision of resources for their children is associated with the well-being, cognitive development, and social competence of young children (Cabrera *et al.* 2000; Cruz *et al.* 2011; Furstenberg 1998; Leidy *et al.* 2011; Morman and Floyd 2006; Snarey 1993).

Some of this literature has also tried to address why fathers struggle to meet these new cultural expectations of the highly involved father. Townsend (2002) conceptualizes fatherhood as an element of the "package deal" that mutually reinforces and is in contradiction with the other three elements: marriage, employment, and home ownership. Due to this contradiction, Townsend argues that the dominant vision of successful fatherhood as illustrated in the "package deal" can oppress and exclude men since it is impossible to achieve, yet many continue to strive for it. Focusing on low-income, inner-city fathers, Edin and Nelson (2013:204) discover the emergence of a "new package deal" where fatherhood is a "tool" men use to defuse the adversity they experience as they come of age in chaotic and violent neighborhoods due to deindustrialization, gentrification, and diminishing social welfare programs. These social changes hinder fathers' abilities to provide financially for their children and they respond by crafting the ethic of "doing the best I can" which works as a "plea of 'no contest'- a middle ground between innocence and guilt- to the charge that they've failed" as fathers (119).

On the other hand, Randles (2013) observes a *repackaging* of the "package deal" and argues that responsible fatherhood policies attempt to shape ideas of successful fatherhood and masculinity in service of the state's anti-poverty, pro-marriage agenda. Based on participant-observations at a federally-funded relationship skills program for low-income, unmarried parents, Randles argues that the program endorsed a class-specific version of "marital masculinity, one that seeks to redefine marriageability for low-income men by claiming that

marriage comes before financial success and encourages fathers to earn more" (865). As some scholars try to make sense of how men are navigating fatherhood in the modern era, others are starting to ask questions about the significance of childrearing on men's lives.

The family studies literature on fatherhood provides us with insights on the history of fatherhood, the mechanisms that promote father involvement, and the effects of involvement on children's personal development. This scholarship, however, does not account for how men's paternal practices are intersectional since most of the literature primarily focuses on middle-class, white, heterosexual fathers and their families. Race, gender, class, sexuality, and age informs how fathers navigate fatherhood. Although I find that the mechanisms that promote father involvement in a white middle-class home are similar to the ones that enhance the quality of paternal involvement in a middle-class Latina/o home, the differential access to resources (e.g., paid parental leave) between Latino and white men shapes the degree to which such involvement is sustainable. Furthermore, these models of responsible fathering are challenged by Latino men who father across borders and who are divorced or separated and do not live with their children. Additionally, most of the early family studies literature does not account for how fatherhood is also a way for men to talk about gender and to see themselves as gendered beings.

Men's fathering is a social practice that also affects men's identities as men. According to Cabrera *et al.* (2000), assessing the father-child relationship is pivotal in determining the development of fathers themselves. Family theorist Kevin Roy (2014) suggests that fatherhood infuses meaning into men's behaviors in families and communities. For example, poor, urban men are drawn to fatherhood because it is one way to gain access to a positive social role (Edin and Nelson 2013). Likewise, Watson-Phillips (2016:277) regards "relational fathering" as a parenting approach that allows men to re-envision their sense of selves and to define a new way

of being in which care work is seen as masculine and manhood as relational. This emerging scholarship directs us to a gender approach to fatherhood.

The Gender Studies Perspective

Masculinities are a historical, social construction. Raewyn Connell (2005:71) defines masculinity as a "place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage in that place […] and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture." These practices are inscribed onto fatherhood. Due to the connections between masculinity and fatherhood, being a "good father" is equated with being a "good man." Scholars have connected the current state of fatherhood to issues that affect men's masculinities (Gillis 2000; Marsiglio and Pleck 2005; Mirandé 1997). These issues include the increasing numbers of women entering the paid workforce, the economic recessions that have left many men unemployed, and the increasing rates of divorce and unwed parenthood (Edin and Nelson 2013; Eggebeen 2002; Kim and Pyke 2015; Randles 2013; Townsend 2002; White 1994).

Moreover, some researchers have focused on how the cultural expectation of "involved fathering," especially with young children, continues to clash with hegemonic cultural ideals of masculinity (Connell 2005; Kim and Pyke 2015; Townsend 2002; Wall and Arnold 2007). In her study on men's narratives and practices around fatherhood, British sociologist Tina Miller (2011) found that fathers were doing and undoing gender simultaneously during the first few weeks after the birth of their first child. The fathers' intentions were to reduce gender difference by sharing care work with their spouses, however, individual and structural elements of gender inequality constrained the continuation of these progressive practices. Miler writes:

> The persistence of patriarchal legacies and associated practices of agency […] continue to enable men to construct and justify caring responsibilities and obligations alongside work choices through the

> wider array of discourses available to them as men, fathers and workers. (1106)

In this instance, fathers rely on discursive strategies to negotiate the expectations of involved fathering with the structural constraints of employment which ultimately ends with men falling back on traditional gender arrangements. The assumption that gender equality is possible if only men change *how* they father, obscures the structural and institutional dimensions of gender inequality. Marsiglio and Pleck (2005) consider how men's approach to fathering contributes to the gendered social inequalities within and outside families and households. They argue that "men's participation in systems of gendered social relations–both between and within genders–shapes their fathering opportunities, attitudes, and behaviors" (250).

A gender perspective, therefore, illustrates how gender identity mitigates men's social relationships with their families and other men. Specifically, a discussion of the theory of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005), allows us to understand how "new fatherhood" discourses promote a hegemonic ideal that privileges white, middle class, professional, working men's fatherhood. Kim and Pyke's (2015) study on the Korean Father School movement illustrates how Euro-American hegemonic masculinity is associated with the "New Man" ideal of a nurturing and emotionally expressive family man. The movement idealizes Euro-American hegemonic masculinity as the remedy to the traditional Korean masculinity of the "distant patriarch" (528). Similarly, Hodges and Budig (2010) argue that markers of hegemonic masculinity in bureaucratic organizations dictate which fathers are given a fatherhood bonus. Although fathers in general may strive to achieve the "four facets of fatherhood" (Townsend 2002)–emotional closeness, provision, protection, and endowment–the majority of them will not be able to achieve them. Although a gender perspective allows us to examine the effects of power on men's fathering, the over-emphasis on white, middle-class

fatherhoods conceals the diversity of masculinities and fatherhoods. The marginalization of men of color's masculinities engenders the marginalization of men of color's fatherhoods. My intention with this study is to address this marginalization by bringing Latino men's fatherhood into dialogue with this literature.

Latino Men's Fatherhood

Earlier scholarship on Mexican men's masculinities and fatherhoods was written in protest against the pejorative, mainstream academic discourses on Mexicans and Mexican Americans (Almaguer 1974; Anzaldúa 1987; Baca Zinn 1982a; Gaitan 1975; Mirandé 1985; 1988; 1997). William Madsen's *The Mexican-Americans of South Texas* and Oscar Lewis' *The Children of Sanchez* introduced the "cultural deficit" or "culture of poverty" perspectives which framed Mexican culture in opposition to modernity. Specifically, these works defined Mexican men's relationship to masculinity as a rigid allegiance to patriarchal norms and attitudes. "Machismo," therefore, emerged as the dominant framework that scholars used to understand Latino masculinities, family structure, and overall subordination (Baca Zinn 1982a). Furthermore, the cultural practices among Latinas and Latinos have been used as the standard for measuring the liberal sexual and gender attitudes of the United States (Hurtado and Sinha 2016).

On the contrary, the protest literature against these claims viewed machismo as a cultural consequence of Spanish colonization of Mexico and Latin America. Gaitan (1975) conceptualized machismo as part of Latino men's inferiority complex due to their *mestizaje*.[3] The inferiority complex, though, is an individualized rationale that ignores the social structures that shape the types of behavioral responses to colonization and internalized racism (Baca Zinn 1982a). Although the notion that Latino men are "machistas" in order to compensate for their

[3] Spanish and Indigenous mixed ancestry.

mestizaje prevails, Guttmann (1996) found that many Latino men actually reject machismo because they see such ethic as pejorative, oppressive, and overall damaging to their communities.

Recently, scholars have revisited Latino men's masculinities in order to provide a more nuanced interpretation of men's masculine practices and fatherhoods. These interpretations consider the effects of neoliberal globalization such as deindustrialization, the loss of stable manufacturing jobs with benefits, increased migration, and divestment from public education (González-López 2005; Noguera *et al.* 2012; Ramirez and Flores 2011; Smith 2006). Other scholars like Hurtado and Sinha (2016) have examined the emergence of feminist masculinities among college-educated Latinos who define manhood in relational, ethical, and counter-hegemonic ways. Overall, existing analyses on Latino men's fatherhood consider the effects of cultural practices and values; ethnic identity and acculturation; emotions; migration and transnational networks; neighborhood contexts; men's familial ties; and the division of household labor on fathering behaviors (Behnke *et al.* 2007; Coltrane *et al.* 2004; Coltrane *et al.* 2005; Cruz *et al.* 2011; Glass and Owen 2010; Leidy *et al.* 2011; Montes 2013; Pinto and Coltrane 2009; Sánchez 2017; Waller 2010).

Despite the number of studies on fatherhoods, masculinities, and Latino men's fathering practices, there are important limitations in the literature. First, the literature on fatherhood is overwhelmingly based on straight, middle-class, white men's fathering experiences. As stated earlier, existing scholarship has not yet assessed how the intersections of race, class, gender, age, and sexuality shape men's approach to fatherhood. Both the cultural expectations embedded in the "new fatherhood" and the stereotypical assumptions of the "fatherhood in crisis" ideologies do not reflect these intersections. Second, most of the literature is based on the mothers' or children's perspectives (see Edin and Nelson 2013 and Townsend 2002 for exceptions). These

perspectives cannot reflect men's own interpretations of fatherhood and how they navigate the structural and cultural landscape that informs their fathering practices.

Third, most of the literature is concerned with the impact of fathers on young children's development without a reciprocal focus on the effects of fatherhood on fathers' understandings of themselves. Although there is a growing body of work on the meanings of fatherhood for Black men (Allen 2016; Edin and Nelson 2013; Johnson and Young 2016; White 2008), similar work has not been done on Latino fathers. Lastly, most studies on Latino fathers are descriptive reports of their values, behaviors and degrees of involvement with young children (D'Angelo Valdovinos *et al.* 2012; Cabrera and Bradley 2012; Karberg *et al.* 2017; Leavell *et al.* 2012; Terriquez 2013). In-depth, structural and cultural analyses will engage Latino fathers as social agents who navigate social structures that create and constrain opportunities for "involved fathering" in a myriad of ways. This study addresses these limitations.

Why Study Latino Fathers?

A study on Latino fatherhoods is significant for four reasons. First, the demographic shifts in U.S. society necessitates the inclusion of Latinas/os in academic work. Latinas/os are the nation's largest ethnic group (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). Between 1960 and 2015, the percentage of Latinas/os in the United States grew from 3.5 percent to 17.6 percent and this growth is projected to reach 24 percent by 2065 (Pew Research Center 2017). There are 15.3 million Latinas/os living in California, making it the state with the largest Latina/o population in the country (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). Moreover, Latina/o families are unprecedented in terms of their diversity (Baca Zinn and Wells 2000). Currently, there are 16.7 million Latina/o households and 57.5 percent of Latina/o married-couple households have children under the age of 18 compared to 39.5 percent of all married-couple households (U.S. Census Bureau 2017).

These demographic shifts are accompanied by cultural changes which provide sociologists with the opportunity to revisit the scholarship on one of the most important social institutions: families. Families are undergoing structural changes and fathers are one point of entry into understanding the lived reverberations of these shifts.

Second, Latino fatherhoods are undertheorized. The existing literatures do not capture the complexity and diversity of Latino fatherhoods (Baca Zinn and Wells 2000). Most of the literature on fatherhood focuses on white, middle-class, heterosexual, professional, working fathers with scant attention on fathers of color, especially Latino fathers (Ide *et al.* 2018; Marsiglio and Pleck 2005). For example, conventional fatherhood models like “responsible fathering” (Doherty *et al.* 1998) do not capture the effects of migration (González-López 2005; Sánchez 2017), which is central to understanding many Latino men’s fathering practices. Fatherhood is a gendered performance and understanding Latino men’s relationship to fatherhood allows us to better understand Latino men’s masculinities.

Third, a study on Latino fatherhoods today can demonstrate what is means to be a parent in the age of Trump. The Latino Threat narrative (Chavez 2013) shapes contemporary political discourses in the United States in gendered ways. Political actors have used the images of Latino men as tools to promote draconian, anti-immigrant and “tough-on- crime” policies. Therefore, it is important to understand how Latino fathers navigate fatherhood in a socio-political context that sees them and their families as the sources of social problems. We are on the brink of a radical social transformation and an investigation on fatherhood in this historical moment provide us with some answers as to how families interpret and respond to these social changes.

Lastly, this project examines Latino fatherhoods from an intersectionalities perspective in order to move academic work beyond the “machismo” framework. Although revisionist work on

Latino men's fatherhood was produced as a response to the "cultural deficit" perspective, this framework does not account for the social and cultural changes that have occurred over the past 40 years which have significantly impacted Latino men's social relationships. Moreover, this framework was developed to account for inter-group differences, however, it does not account for the growing diversity of Latinas/os. An intersectionalities perspective engages the diversity that exists *among* Latino men and how it is reflected in their fathering practices. This critical race feminist theoretical framework also highlights the multiple processes that work together, often in contradictory ways, to shape the everyday lives of Latino men. Previous work on motherhood has been carried out through an intersectional lens (Collins 2000; Naples 1992; Pardo 1999), and now it is time to do similar work on fatherhood.

Using Feminist Theory to Study Men

Intersectionality is the *relationship* between overlapping systems of oppression which shapes lived experiences in multidimensional ways. According to Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989:140) "the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism." As such, to think "intersectionally" is to understand the all people have a matrix of overlapping identities that are in constant relation to each other as they experience the social world. For this study, however, I employ the plural form of "intersectionalities." This conceptualization reflects the existence of multiple, culturally-specific intersecting social relations. A culturally-specific intersectionalities analysis considers power differentials and how different groups navigate these complexities. An intersectionalities perspective illuminates how the intersections of race, class, gender, generation, sexuality, citizenship, and ability inform Latino men's relationship to fatherhood. This perspective also reveals the intra-group diversity among Latino fatherhoods.

In particular, I adopt HaeYeon Choo and Myra Marx Ferree's (2010) practices of "inclusive," "analytical," and "systemic" intersectionality. Adopting an *inclusive intersectional* approach allowed me to design a study in which Latino fathers can speak about their experiences, hopes, struggles, and dreams. An inclusive intersectional lens perceives Latino fathers as social agents who are active in meaning-making processes. By drawing on *analytical intersectionality*, I move beyond the enumeration and addition of race, class, gender and other types of social identities as separate factors, and instead I see them as relationships shaped by time and space. Using a *systemic intersectional* approach allows me to see the interactions between race, gender, class, and citizenship as fundamentally embedded in the conditions under which Latino men father and how they make sense of those conditions. This multi-dimensional intersectionalities perspective is an important and necessary analytical lens in order to understand the interconnectivity of social knowledge, identity, and experiences of Latino fathers.

A central part of my analysis focuses on the structural forces that create opportunities and constraints for Latino men's fathering practices. Edin and Nelson's (2013) study is a precedent that examines the effects of the political economy on low-income, Black and White fathers living in the inner-city. In the second chapter of this text, I raise the question: how does the social position of Latino men as a group in the political economy of California impact their fathering and what they see as possible? A cultural analysis, on the other hand, explains how Latino men understand those opportunities and constraints and their response to these circumstances. Highlighting the importance of cultural analyses, Townsend (2002:7) writes "to see the dominant values of society is to understand what the members of that society must confront in their daily lives." Respondents also kept referring to fatherhood as an important space where they found unconditional love, admiration, and dignity. Johnson and Young (2016:15) argue that we need

in-depth cultural analyses on fatherhood because such examinations explore whether fathers value the role of father and why and "how they negotiate their beliefs and worldviews regarding paternal roles, the challenges they face, and stigma." This study aims to provide an in-depth cultural and structural analysis on Latino men's involved fatherhoods.

Methods

I conducted in-depth interviews with 60 Latino[4] fathers in California from 2018-2019. My decision to conduct interviews is shaped by my ontological and epistemological perspectives. As a feminist, qualitative researcher, I approach the social world as made up of people whose narratives and lived experiences are important sources of knowledge about the workings of larger social institutions and structures. Qualitative interviews were the appropriate method to collect data since I am exploring and understanding Latino fathers' perspectives, meanings, and experiences. Conducting interviews also allowed me to follow up or probe on

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[4] The question of whether "Latina/o" is an ethnic, racial, or cultural label is often debated among race scholars (Almaguer 2012; Bonilla-Silva 2002; Dowling 2014; Feagin 2010; Flores-Gonzalez 1999; Oboler 1995; Rodriguez 2000; Vasquez 2010b). For example, Bolash-Goza and Darrity (2008) conceptualize "Latina/o" as a racialized ethnic label. On the other hand, Hurtado and Sinha (2016:2) suggest that "Latina/o" emphasizes the significance of "expressing cultural and political solidarity among Latin American national groups." The term "Latina/o" generally refers to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central or South American descent. Latinas/os in the United States use various terms to identify their specific ethnicity and this labeling process is linked to each group's historical trajectory. For example, some second- and third-generation Mexican Americans may identify themselves as "Chicana/o." Self-designated labels, such as "Chicana/o" serve to affirm ethnic cultural pride and are political in order to highlight their group's racialized experiences in the United States. Self-designated labels may also reflect the labeling practices of Latina/o groups concentrated in particular U.S. regions, such as California or Texas. Latinas/os are also frequently referred to as "Hispanics." Certain Latinas/os however, are "critical of the term because they [feel] it was imposed by the national government and it celebrated their Spanish rather than indigenous roots" (Sáenz and Morales 2015:3). Scholars have also argued that racial and ethnic identities are relational and situational (Jiménez 2004; Rodriguez 2000). In thus study, I highlight the age, class and generational status of my participants and I use the term "Latino." I also use their self-designated labels when referring to my participants since those are the terms they use to identify their ethnicity. Since my study took place in California, the majority of my informants are of Mexican-origin. During data analysis, I separated Latinos by ethnicity and national origin (and, when applicable, biraciality or multiraciality) in order to examine differences in their conceptualization and practices of fatherhood.

unanticipated areas of inquiry, accounts of action, hints, or implicit views of informants. Overall, qualitative interviews provided me flexibility by probing as well as control by having a semi-structured interview guide with a set of open-ended questions that I want to ask my informants.

I recruited participants by: visiting public social spaces (e.g., parks and beaches) during weekends and holidays; attending public events (e.g., fairs and baby expos) that targeted families with children; and attending parent events at local public schools. I recruited participants mainly in the northern California county of Santa Clara, and the southern California counties of San Bernardino and Los Angeles, respectively. I worked with a non-profit organization in southern California that serves Latina/o families and the community-at-large, who facilitated my recruitment of fathers who attended their weekly events. I was also granted permission to recruit participants from a school district in southern California and a charter school in northern California. Face-to-face interviews took place at convenient times and places for participants (e.g., coffee shops, community spaces, homes, and workplaces), lasted, on average, one hour and thirty minutes, and were conducted in Spanish, English or a combination. Respondents were compensated with twenty dollars for participation. I, along with two undergraduate research assistants whom I trained, transcribed the interviews.

Of the 60 interviewees, the overwhelming majority (53 of 60) were of Mexican descent, (the largest Latina/o subgroup in the U.S.), four were Salvadoran, two were South American (Colombian or Peruvian), and one was Puerto Rican. Three participants also identified as biracial or mixed-race, and three participants also claimed Native American ancestry. Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 73 (with 47 as the median). Thirty-one participants were first generation, 21 respondents were second generation, and 15 were part of the third (or later) generation. In terms of educational attainment, 24 had a High School Diploma or less, seven attended some college or

technical institute, and 29 had a Bachelor's degree or higher. Participants worked in a variety of occupations: 32 worked in professional, managerial, and administrative jobs such as education; 22 in manual (skilled and semi-skilled) jobs; and six participants worked in personal-service-oriented occupations. See Appendix A for a more thorough profile of study participants.

The Organization of the Dissertation

In the next chapter, I examine how work and employment undermines *and* promotes men's enactment of the new Latino father ideal. I begin with work and employment because it is the most widely discussed issue in the fatherhood literature. The social expectation of fathers to financially provide cuts across many cultural contexts but, it is commonly assumed to be the main interest of Latino fathers, in particular Mexican-origin fathers. Therefore, it is also a key marker that differentiates how fatherhood is enacted in the past vis-à-vis the present for participants. Work is a crucial element that affect men's opportunities to achieve the ideal of the new Latino father.

In Chapter 3, I focus on participants' childhood experiences. Many of the participants' work lives began when they were children, bringing attention to the social construction of childhood. Latino fathers' childhood experiences affect their parenting and their gendered sense of self- worth. Here, I argue that the denial of an idealized childhood compels Latino fathers to value the "pricelessness" of their children. A "normal" and ideal childhood, though, is made possible by a socially ideal fatherhood. Consequently, Latino fathers' abilities to parent "priceless" children is mediated by the interlocking structures of race and class.

In Chapter 4, I explore Latino fathers' relationships with their own fathers. A central figure in their childhood memories and how they understand their own fathering practices is their own fathers or other men who served as father figures. As they look back at the men who raised

or did not raise them, I argue that Latino fathers' relationships with these men expose a continuum between two extremes of reverence and resentment. On one hand, some participants recalled loving relationships and pleasant interactions with their father figures that involved mutual respect, admiration, and trust. Others remembered hating their fathers growing up and they characterized their relationships as turbulent, involving fear and violence. This continuum is neither flat, unidimensional or static. Nuanced expressions of idolization and hatred, fulfillment and longing, *respeto* (respect) and indifference, forgiveness and condemnation may exist between these two extremes and they change throughout the life course. This continuum shows the new Latino father ideal in work, shaping how participants remember their fathers and how they frame contemporary Latino fatherhood.

In chapter 5, I convey the centrality of women and the institution of motherhood on Latino men's involved fatherhoods. In this chapter, I argue that the naturalization of motherhood drives the "un-naturalness" of fatherhood which leads men to frame fatherhood as work. An analysis of Latino fathers' accounts hints at how "involved fatherhood" is conceived as "achieved parenting" and motherhood as "denied achievement" because of gender essentialist assumptions about motherhood. I examine the sacralization of Latina mothers and men's experiences of childbirth and child custody hearings to illustrate this process. Overall, the meanings that fathers attach to fatherhood are shaped by their beliefs of whether they can be as competent in caregiving as mothers are perceived to be. I propose that this standard is a unique feature of the new Latino father ideal.

II. Working at Fatherhood[5]: The Impact of Work and Employment on Latino Men's Involved Fatherhood

Ricardo, a 31-year-old second generation Mexican-American father, recalled a moment that compelled him to rethink his role as his family's financial provider. Ricardo and his daughter were watching a television show together and she asked him a question about one of the show's characters. He explained to her, "oh it's probably because they work a lot" and she responded, "like you?". Ricardo was shocked that his six-year-old daughter had the impression that he worked a lot. When I asked him what he thought about his daughter's assessment of his work schedule, Ricardo said, "[it] just hit me hard and I was just like, am I doing enough? […] I thought, being the main earner, giving the full benefit to my wife to be at home, I thought that would be enough." Like Ricardo, the majority of Latino fathers I interviewed identify financial provision as one of their most important familial responsibilities and this hampers their abilities to balance work and family life; leaving many to wonder if they are indeed *doing enough.* Fatherhood is inextricably tied to cultural constructions of masculinity and the social expectation of men as workers. As a result, work is one of the most examined issues in the fatherhood literature (Arditti *et al.* 2014; Coltrane *et al.* 2005; Edin and Nelson 2013; Hodges and Budgig 2010; Orloff and Monson 2002; Sánchez 2017; Townsend 2002). According to anthropologist Nicholas Townsend (2002:128), "work [is] an expression of paternal responsibility."

How do Latino fathers approach work? How have these approaches changed in the last century? Are there age, class and generational differences in Latino men's relationship to work? How do stay-at-home, retired or underemployed Latino fathers (who work part-time) perceive

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[5] The title of this chapter pays homage to Denise Segura's essay, "Working at Motherhood: Chicana and Mexican Immigrant Mothers and Employment." I would like to thank Dr. Segura for encouraging me to pursue my intellectual curiosity regarding Latino fathers and for believing in this project from the very beginning.

their responsibilities to their families? In this chapter, I argue that work enables Latino fathers to be good providers, but at the same time, work pulls them away from family life, detracting from accomplishing the involved fathering ideal. First, I will provide a current statistical portrait of Latino men's labor force participation in the United States to illustrate how their rates of employment, types of job, and earnings inform their parenting. Second, I will discuss how work *enables* Latino men's fathering and their performance of appropriate Latino masculinity. I will also address how male educators and community advocates, in particular, view work as a fathering space. Third, I will examine how work *obstructs* Latino men's fathering. Work limits the time they spend with their children and families and the majority of participants realize that work also prevented them from getting to know their *own* fathers in a deep, intimate way. This realization drives mostly college-educated, professional, Latino fathers to adjust their work commitments or schedules to make time for their families. Lastly, I will discuss how some Latino fathers use men's commitment to paid employment as a way to monitor other men's fatherhood.

Latino Men's Employment in the United States

In 2018, about 27 million Latinas/os were employed in the United States; accounting for 17 percent of the total U.S. labor force (Kochhar and Krogstad 2017; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018).[6] Nearly 61 percent of the Latina/o labor force is of Mexican decent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018). In terms of gender, the composition of the Latina/o workforce

[6] Employed persons are classified as full- or part-time workers based on their usual weekly hours at all jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018). The labor force is made up of people who are working and those who are actively seeking employment, but do not have a job. Currently, 67 percent of Latinas/os, ages 16 and over, are in the labor force. The Latina/o labor force has grown more than six times over the past 40 years–from 4.3 million people in 1976 to 26.8 million in 2016–while the overall labor force, comprising of all other groups, grew less than half—from about 92 million in 1976 to 132 million in 2016 (Green and Tossi 2018). Overall, the Latina/o share of the labor force is projected to increase more than that of any race or ethnic group by 2026.

is 57 percent men and 43 percent women.[7] In particular, almost 91 percent of *all* Latino men are employed compared to 92 percent of white men and 84 percent of Black men (Sáenz and Morales 2015). Furthermore, 61 percent of U.S.-born Latinas/os are employed compared to 66 percent of foreign-born Latinas/os; making unemployment higher for U.S-born Latinas/os (Kaberg *et al*. 2017; Noe-Bustamante and Flores 2019).[8] In California, Latinas/os of working age are slightly more likely to be in the labor force, and more likely to be employed, than non-Latinos/as of the working-age population (California Senate Office of Research 2017).[9] Moreover, nearly 22.4 million Latinas/os work full-time while 4.6 million are employed part-time (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018).[10] Overall, these statistics show that Latinas/os (especially Latino immigrant men) have high rates of employment and their participation in the work force is predicted to increase in the next ten years.

So, where do Latinas/os work? Nearly 6.6 million Latinas/os work in service occupations such as food preparation, building/grounds cleaning, and personal care. Additionally, about 4.6 million work in construction and maintenance-type jobs. Specifically, the Latino male workforce is concentrated in three industries: production and transportation; construction and maintenance;

[7] According to a report by the Pew Research Center, Latina women have experienced greater economic recovery than Latino men since the 2007 recession because women are more likely to work in industries that have added the most jobs since the recession, namely social assistance education, health care, accommodation and food services (Kochhar and Krogstad 2017). Studies have shown that women's employment impacts men's degree of involvement in family life (Coltrane, Parke and Adams 2004; Doucet 2018; Guttmann 1996; Johnson and Young 2016). The likelihood that Latina women are more likely to secure employment than their male spouses can potentially alter the gender dynamics in the household and how men define their contribution to their families.
[8] Thirty-four percent of U.S.-born Latinas/os are not in the labor force compared to 31 percent of foreign-born Latinas/os (Noe-Bustamante and Flores 2019). These figures may be due to the fact that the U.S.-born Latina/o population is relatively young (under the working age of 16).
[9] Higher labor force participation rates for Latinas/os may reflect the fact that the Latina/o population tends to be younger than the non-Latina/o population.
[10] Full-time is 35 hours or more per week and part-time is less than 35 hours (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018).

and services (Torres and Fergus 2012).[11] Overall, close to 21 million Latinas/os work in "brown-collar jobs" (Catanzarite 2000) like service, sales, construction and transportation-related occupations, which are mostly low-wage, unregulated, and unsafe.[12] According to the National Poverty Center (2007), Latino men are becoming the "new face of the low wage industry." On the other hand, about 6 million Latina/o workers work in management, business or professional occupations. In particular, 995,000 Latinas/os work in education, training, and library occupations, though most Latinas/os work in management and business (nearly 1.9 million).[13] For a comprehensive list of occupational sectors, see Table 1.

Table 1: Employed Latina/o Workers by Occupation and Ethnic Group, 2018[14]

Occupation	Hispanic or Latina/o Ethnicity			
	Total[15]	**Mexican**	**Puerto Rican**	**Cuban**
Total labor force, 16 years and over	27,012	16,497	2,272	1,139
Management, professional, and related occupations	6,048	3,210	689	353
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	2,535	1,401	256	141
Management occupations	1,874	1,064	193	98
Business and financial operations occupations	661	337	62	43
Professional and related occupations	3,513	1,809	434	212
Computer and mathematical occupations	382	166	59	24

[11] The occupational distribution of Latino men varies by national origin. Over half of Mexican and Central American men work in construction/maintenance and production/transportation industries whereas Cubans, South Americans, and Puerto Ricans are most likely to work in white-collar professions, such as management and sales (Torres and Fergus 2012).
[12] According to the Center for Disease Control, Latinas/os have the highest work-related fatal injury rates– 4.4 per 100,00 workers– compared to other ethnic groups (Malavé and Giordani 2015).
[13] This figure may reflect the growing number of Latinas/os who are self-employed, small business owners. According to data from the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, 9.1 percent of Latinas/os are self-employed compared to 7.8 percent of the general U.S. population. Furthermore, the amount of Latina/o-owned businesses grew about seven percent from 2007-2013 (Malavé and Giordani 2015). In particular, Latina entrepreneurs are starting small businesses at a rate that is six times the national average (ibid). Most of this growth is taking place in California (see Pastor 2016).
[14] Source: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018). Numbers shown are in thousands. The table has been modified by the author to only show data of employed Latina/o workers by occupation and ethnicity. Original table included data on gender, full-or part-time status and class of worker.
[15] Includes persons of Central or South American origin and of other Hispanic or Latina/o ethnicities, not shown separately.

Architecture and engineering occupations	290	155	26	14
Life, physical, and social science occupations	133	68	15	6
Community and social service occupations	325	177	45	15
Legal occupations	187	98	22	16
Education, training, and library occupations	995	556	120	51
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	397	180	42	23
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	803	410	104	62
Service occupations	6,563	4,025	482	227
Healthcare support occupations	665	374	62	32
Protective service occupations	441	255	58	24
Food preparation and serving related occupations	2,126	1,383	142	46
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	2,273	1,416	111	76
Personal care and service occupations	1,059	596	109	50
Sales and office occupations	5,558	3,377	566	243
Sales and related occupations	2,582	1,547	263	131
Office and administrative support occupations	2,976	1,831	303	112
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	4,610	3,137	202	153
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	516	459	5	3
Construction and extraction occupations	3,088	2,071	100	95
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	1,006	608	96	55
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	4,234	2,748	334	163
Production occupations	2,021	1,391	135	59
Transportation and material moving occupations	2,213	1,357	199	104

Given the overrepresentation of Latinas/os in low-wage occupations, their real median *household* income is $49,010 (Noe-Bustamante and Flores 2019).[16] In California, Latinas/os have a median household income of $47,200 compared to the median household income of $69,606 for non-Latinas/os (California Senate Office of Research 2017). Household income among Latinas/os, however, varies by nativity. The median household income for U.S.-born

[16] Median household income is the "middle" income level at which 50 percent of households have higher incomes and 50 percent of households have lower incomes. Median household income includes income in the past 12 months from wages or salaries; self-employment; interest, dividends, or rental property; Social Security; retirement; public assistance; and food stamp benefits (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

Latinas/os is $53,000 compared to $45,200 for foreign-born Latinas/os; despite the fact that immigrant Latinas/os have higher rates of employment (ibid).

Regarding their *personal* income, Latinas/os earned $30,000 in 2017; the lowest of any racial or ethnic group (see Table 2 in next page). In California, the median annual personal earnings of working Latinas/os ages 16 and over was $22,000 per year compared to that of Whites ($42,000) and Blacks ($30,000) (Pew Research Center 2014). According to the Institute for Women's Policy and Research, Latino men's median weekly earnings was $720; the lowest compared to *all* men from all other racial or ethnic groups (Hegewisch and Hartmann 2019).[17] Strikingly, the wage gap between Mexican American men and White men, in particular, has been the widest and most unchanging (Mora and Dávila 2018).

Income varies, however, by nativity and documentation status. The personal income of U.S.-born Latinas/os in 2017 was $37,078 whereas immigrant Latinas/os earned $33,345 (Kochhar 2019). In regards to documentation status, documented immigrants' personal income was $37,369 compared to the personal income of undocumented immigrants, which was $28,163 in 2017 (see Table 3 in next page).

[17] Individual and structural forces such as English proficiency, educational attainment; acculturation, nationality, phenotype, discrimination, self-identity, and residential location have been examined to understand Latino men's labor force participation and earnings (Barrera 1979; Karberg *et al.* 2017; Massey and Denton 1993; Sáenz and Morales 2015; Telles and Ortiz 2008; Tienda 1983; Torres and Fergus 2012; Zavella 2011).

Table 2: Personal Income of Workers, by Race and Ethnicity [18]

Personal income of workers, by race and ethnicity

Median total personal income of workers, in 2017 dollars

	All	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
2007	$38,686	$42,666	$33,185	$28,444	$44,801
2008	37,344	41,088	31,957	26,707	43,093
2009	37,795	42,090	32,069	26,342	43,522
2010	38,308	42,815	31,548	25,918	41,038
2011	38,003	41,758	31,659	26,224	39,868
2012	37,437	42,168	31,019	25,688	42,787
2013	37,457	42,377	31,620	26,350	44,694
2014	37,323	41,801	31,094	26,707	41,672
2015	39,318	43,732	32,075	28,825	46,564
2016	40,860	45,940	32,688	30,645	47,032
2017	40,010	45,500	33,602	30,000	50,000

Note: Whites, blacks and Asians are single-race non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Asians includes Pacific Islanders. Workers are people 15 and older with work experience in the year preceding the survey year. Estimates for 2013 and later years are based on a new set of income questions in the source data. See Methodology for details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2008-2018 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplements (IPUMS).
"Latinos' Incomes Higher Than Before Great Recession, but U.S.-Born Latinos Yet to Recover"

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Table 3: Personal Income of Latina/o Workers, by Immigration Status[19]

Personal income of Hispanic workers, by immigration status

Mean total personal income of workers, in 2017 dollars

			FOREIGN BORN		
	All Hispanics	U.S. born	All	Lawful	Un-authorized
2006	$33,652	$36,805	$31,168	$36,241	$25,574
2007	34,284	37,512	31,783	37,291	25,959
2008	34,638	37,787	32,005	37,095	26,633
2009	32,806	36,255	29,850	34,867	24,383
2010	33,109	36,614	30,015	34,979	24,638
2011	32,958	36,063	30,112	34,921	24,940
2012	32,859	35,594	30,237	34,897	24,908
2013	33,024	35,337	30,784	35,571	25,124
2014	33,495	35,954	30,993	35,353	25,691
2015	34,302	36,070	32,423	36,727	27,030
2016	35,290	37,078	33,345	37,369	28,163

Note: Hispanics are of any race. Sample includes people 16 and older who worked in the year preceding the date of the survey.
Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on augmented American Community Survey (IPUMS) data. See Methodology for details.
"Latinos' Incomes Higher Than Before Great Recession, but U.S.-Born Latinos Yet to Recover"

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[18] Source: Kochhar, Rakesh. 2019. "Latinos' Incomes Higher than Before Great Recession, but U.S.-Born Latinos yet to Recover." Retrieved: December 5, 2019 (https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2019/03/07/latinos-incomes-higher-than-before-great-recession-but-u-s-born-latinos-yet-to-recover/).

[19] Source: Kochhar, Rakesh. 2019. "Latinos' Incomes Higher than Before Great Recession, but U.S.-Born Latinos yet to Recover." Retrieved: December 5, 2019

In general, Latinas/os are overrepresented in the lower income brackets and they have a higher share of living in poverty (19 percent) compared to the national average (13 percent) (Noe-Bustamante and Flores 2019). In California, 12 percent of non-Latinas/os lived in poverty from 2010 to 2014, while 23 percent of Latinas/os lived in poverty during that same period (California Senate Office of Research 2017). Moreover, poverty rates in California vary by Latina/o subgroup– Guatemalans are slightly more likely to live in poverty (26 percent) than Mexicans (24 percent) and Salvadorans (21 percent) (ibid).

Overall, despite their high participation in both the U.S. and California labor markets and low unemployment rates, Latinas/os are more likely to work in low-wage occupations and industries, earn less, and live in poverty compared to non-Latinas/os.[20] According to Orloff and Monson (2002:63), “men in disadvantaged positions in the labor market- disproportionately men of color and unskilled men- are often left unable to sustain households.” To understand Latina/o family diversity, Baca Zinn and Wells (2000:254) suggest “exposing the structural forces [such as the structure of economic opportunity] that impinge differently on families in specific social, material and historical contexts.” So, in a society where financial provision is still seen as the primary responsibility of men, how does this statistical portrait shape the everyday life experiences of Latino fathers? What are the consequences of labor market segregation and stratification on the familial experiences of Latino fathers?

(https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2019/03/07/latinos-incomes-higher-than-before-great-recession-but-u-s-born-latinos-yet-to-recover/).

[20] Pastor (2016) provides three potential solutions that could improve the work and life chances of Latinas/os in California’s changing economy. These remedies are: promoting economic growth via public investment; targeted education, training and placement and increasing parent and community engagement in schools; and improving labor standards which includes raising the minimum wage and expanding health care coverage.

The participants I interviewed worked in a variety of occupations. Thirty-two respondents worked in professional, managerial, and administrative jobs such as education and business management; 22 participants were employed in manual (skilled and semi-skilled) jobs such as construction and maintenance; and six participants worked in personal-service-oriented occupations such as food and dining.[21] Furthermore, 15 respondents held more than one job. In terms of their educational attainment, 24 respondents had a High School Diploma or less, seven had attended some college or technical institute, and 29 had a Bachelor's degree or higher. Although all of the respondents identified financial provision as one of their familial responsibilities, many of them hesitated to claim it as their *only* responsibility or the *most important* one. This approach is emblematic of the larger social change in the "culture of fatherhood" (LaRossa 1997).

Several scholars have noted the emergence of a "New Fatherhood" ideal in which men are combining breadwinning with availability, engagement, and nurturing (Adams and Coltrane 2008; Coltrane 2019; Dermott and Miller 2015; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner 1994; Johnson and Young 2016; Kim and Pyke 2015; Miller 2011; Toth and Xu 1999; Wall and Arnold 2007). However, to what extent are Latino fathers successful in balancing these different facets of fatherhood when their access to the necessary material resources to sustain involved fathering is limited compared to their white counterparts? Historian Ralph LaRossa (1997:11) advises fatherhood scholars to recognize the complicated and contradictory relationship between the "culture of fatherhood" (the norms, values and beliefs about men's parenting) and the "conduct of fatherhood" (what fathers actually do). Although all fathers are now being encouraged to

[21] Although white middle-class men are overrepresented in the fatherhood literature in general, the studies that do focus on Latino fatherhood are mostly based on working-class Latino fathers. Therefore, I made the decision to recruit more Latino middle-class fathers in order to bridge this gap and bring scholarly attention to the intersections of race and class in fatherhood experiences.

"mother" (Doucet 2016), breadwinning is still part of fatherhood and it is usually the first item on fathers' "to-do list." Men still have to work and "the capacity to father is based on labor market status" (Orloff and Monson 2002:63). Work produces the contradictions between what men say about their fatherhood experiences and what they actually do.

The struggle to negotiate these contradictions is evident in the *testimonios* of participants. Fathers' self-assessments of whether they fulfilled society's expectation of them as working and involved fathers was mixed. They were proud, ambivalent, anxious, regretful, and hopeful. The interviews show how the structure of the economy, the organization of work, and workplace cultures continue to inform men's fathering. Although, some participants believe that work supports their fathering, they are conscious of the trade-off it entails.

"If Your Work Is Good, Then Your Family Will Be Good": Work *Enables* Latino Men's Involved Fathering

Of the 60 Latino fathers I interviewed, 21 of them view work and financial provision as their primary responsibility to their families. These fathers vary in age, but generation-since-immigration and class mostly inform these meanings: 16 are first-generation and fourteen are working-class.[22] These fathers believe that work is something they *must* do in order to be considered "good fathers." Work allows them to provide a home, food, clothes, funds for leisure activities or a college-education for their children (and possibly their extended families). Marcial is a 30-year-old construction worker who migrated from Mexico when he was an adolescent. His older brother (who he considers a father figure) urged him to remember that "work is not as important as family. Family is always first for everything." Although Marcial fundamentally agrees with his brother, he also stresses, "it's necessary to maintain a job and do your job because

[22] Seven middle-class fathers believe work facilitates their fathering. Interestingly, four held upper management positions and two worked in law enforcement alluding to the potential influence of workplace cultures on their family lives.

if your work is good, then your family will be good. And if my job isn't secured, how am I going to feed them? Where are they going to live?". Marcial agrees with the principal, "family first" but, he also understands that his job allows him to demonstrate his commitment to his family by being able to provide them the material means to live. He defines provision as a form of care.

Javier shares Marcial's concern about maintaining his job since he is also the sole-earner in his household. Javier is 52 years old and he migrated to the United States from a small rancho in Jalisco, Mexico in the late 1980s. When his children were younger, Javier was afraid of losing his job, especially when the construction company he worked for started to lay-off employees. Javier remembers this time as "very difficult":

> *Lo más difícil [es] cuando no tienes nada para darles, proveerles, porque tienes problemas en tu trabajo [...] Sí hubo momentos en que se acabo el trabajo y hice pocas horas y no había para pagar los biles y todo eso. Eran momentos difíciles porque ya no es nomás uno; ya es la familia. Si me corren, ya no tengo [dinero] para la renta. ¿Qué voy a hacer?*
>
> What's most difficult [is] when you do not have anything to give them, to provide them, because you have problems at work [...] Yes there were times when there was no work and I worked a few hours and there was no money to pay the bills and all that. They were difficult times because it is no longer just me; it's a family. If they fire me, I don't have [money] for the rent anymore. What I am going to do?

Javier's testimony echoes Townsend's (2002) concept of the "package deal" in which home ownership secures a family's shelter and standard of living thus contributing to one of the facets of fatherhood: provision. For Javier, if all is well at work, then all will be well at home because the bills will be paid and the rent will be covered. Work is fundamental for his family's well-being and his own conception of paternal responsibility.

Similarly, Marcos, a 52-year-old mechanic from Mexicali, Baja California, views fatherhood as a great responsibility that gave him *"más ganas de trabajar para darles una*

educación, que es lo más importante" ("greater desire to work to give [his children] an education, which is the most important thing"). His children motivated him to work harder; a mutual sentiment among others. During many of the interviews, fathers constantly shared that they get up early to go to work, work late, sit in traffic, and or work multiple jobs *because* they love their kids and their families. Work is not just something that these fathers do for a living; rather, it is a mechanism by which to provide love and social belonging to their children.

Working to Provide in a Consumer Culture

Any analysis of the impact of work on the lives of people in the United States must engage capitalism. While interviewees alluded to capitalism in indirect ways through the language of work hours and income, many of these men spoke directly about consumer capitalism and consumer culture. When I asked Javier what would he have needed to be the best father he wanted to be for his children, he indicates he would have liked to have a better job so that he could provide his children a middle-class lifestyle. With his arms crossed over his chest, holding his elbows, Javier shares:

> *Ellos antes pues se queja[ban] porque ay veces no les compraba buenas marcas […] por la sociedad… porque los niños… que no traen ropa cara, zapatos caros y uno… hay veces… no más que no anden descalzos. Pero si les hemos proveído lo mejor que hemos podido y hay veces uno dice "no pues, si yo hubiera haber estudiado, si hubiera un mejor trabajo, a lo mejor no les faltaria nada de lo que ellos querían."*
>
> They used to complain because sometimes I wouldn't buy them brand-name things [...] because society… because children ... are not wearing expensive clothes, expensive shoes and one ... sometimes ... we just don't want them barefoot. But we provided them with the best that we could and sometimes one says "well if I had studied, if there was a better job, maybe they would not have lacked the things they wanted."

Javier's testimony raises an important question: what does it mean "to provide" in a consumer capitalist society? Like Javier, all of the Latino immigrant working-class fathers were raised in impoverished households, and they mostly define "good fathering" as providing their children all of the commodities that symbolize a middle-class lifestyle, such as brand-name clothing, tech appliances, toys, etc. Javier was content with simply providing his children shoes since having shoes was considered a luxury in his rural hometown in Mexico. But he notes that in U.S. society, it is not enough for kids to have shoes; they have to have the *right* type of shoes–the expensive ones–which he could not afford when his children were younger.

Octavio, a 51-year-old working-class father from Oaxaca, Mexico, does whatever it takes to motivate his two adolescent kids, which includes appeasing their consumer desires. Whether it is a football jersey for his son or a manicure and eyebrow threading for his daughter, Octavio always says yes, even when he cannot afford to do so. To cover expenses, Octavio conveys:

> *Yo me ando comprando ropa de segunda para tener dinero y comprarles a ellos su ropa de marca que quieren. Porque así están contentos. […] Mi hijo fue un día a la tienda y compró un pantalón de $120 y me dijo, "Papá, mira están muy caros." [Y yo le dije] "no llévatelo" […] mientras yo voy a la segunda buscando mi ropa de 5 o 6 dólares y así me visto. […] Y ellos saben porque me han dicho, "Papá, cuando vamos a la tienda, va y no se compra nada." Cuando vamos al mall… "Papá, mira esta camisa." Si me gusta, pero yo les digo, "no, no me gusta esa camisa."*
>
> I go shopping for second-hand clothes to have money to buy them the brand-name clothes they want. Because that's how they are happy. [...] My son went to the store one day and bought a pair of $120 pants and said, "Dad, look, they are very expensive." [And I told him] "no, take them" [...] meanwhile I go to thrift stores looking my clothes for 5 or 6 dollars and that's how I dress. […] And they know because they told me, "Dad, when we go to the store, you go and you don't buy anything." When we go to the mall ... "Dad, look at this shirt." I like it, but I tell them, "no, I don't like that shirt."

Octavio makes room in the household budget by cutting down his own personal expenses and curtailing his own consumer desires for his children. It is a sacrifice he is willing to make because he loves his kids. He echoes Zukin's (2004:30) astute observation: "the things we need to buy are framed by our love for the significant others we buy for."

Moreover, Octavio constantly tells his adolescent children, *"échenle ganas a la escuela para que ustedes sean alguien"* ("give it your all to school so that you can be somebody") and draws from his personal experience working long hours, getting up as early as 3 a.m., and coming home tired as a way to motivate them to do well in school. In her study, *The Commercialization of Intimate Life*, Arlie Hochschild points to the strategies parents use to handle the stress of overwork, including "caring consumption." Both work and shopping sustain cultural capitalism and Hochschild warns that practices such as caring consumption will continue to push parents towards the workplace or the mall, decentering family life and materializing love. Octavio's strategy to motivate his children through caring consumption is pushing him even further towards the workplace, at the same time, he uses his own work experience as a cautionary tale.

Thinking more about intergenerational wealth, Horacio, a 66-year-old Mexican immigrant who works at a university dining common, wishes he had more to bequeath his only son. Waving his arms in the air, Horacio exclaims, "*ya quisiera darle un carro del año [a mi hijo]. Quisiera darle una casa nueva; ¡pero no tengo! No tengo con qué darle*" ("I would like to give a brand new car [to my son]. I would like to give him a new house; but I don't have anything! I don't have anything to give him"). Despite having always worked two jobs in order to support his family and having a close relationship with his son (who is now living with his own family in Horacio's house rent-free), Horacio still thinks it is not enough.

Sociologist Allison Pugh (2009) argues that parents and children's desires to have the latest athletic shoes, car, video game, doll, etc. stems less from striving for status or falling victim to corporate advertisement than from yearning to socially belong. Her argument and my participants' narratives raise the question: is an element of Latino men's involved fathering to help their children feel they belong to U.S. (white middle-class) consumer culture? Bruno, a 50-year-old retired police officer, recalls an incident when he was in middle school after his family moved from a working-class Latina/o neighborhood in Santa Ana to the white middle-class city of Huntington Beach. At the beginning of the new school year, a white female classmate asked Bruno why he did not have any new school clothes. Bruno deflected the question by telling her that he was just waiting for Christmas so that he can get more new clothes. He did not want her to know that "we're poor and we don't have that luxury." This moment has "always has stuck" with Bruno and it motivated him "to work hard for my money." By working hard, Bruno was able to financially provide so that his sons "don't have to be in those kind of situations." Work enables these fathers to provide their children a sense of belonging to U.S. consumer culture via the symbolic capital of a middle-class life.

Family Leave and Involved Fathering

The organization of work, specifically its flexibility and provision for access to parental leave, is a key issue in facilitating participants' involved fathering. Work not only allows men to provide for their families, but it can also facilitate involvement if and when it is organized to do so. In regards to paid parental leave, the state of California has some of the most protective family leave policies in the country.[23] Parental leave benefits are determined by the state's

[23] In California-state policy, maternity and paternity leave are referred to as "family leave." I will use the terms family leave and "parental leave," interchangeably, to refer to men taking time off work to care for their newborn children.

Employment Development Department (EDD). A parent may receive up to six weeks of Paid Family Leave (PFL) benefits in a 12-month period.[24] Parents' weekly benefit amount is about 60 to 70 percent (depending on income) of wages earned five to 18 months before the start date of their leave.[25] A person must meet three eligibility requirements in order to qualify for PFL benefits. They must have: welcomed a new child into the family in the past 12 months through a partner's pregnancy, adoption, or foster care; have paid into State Disability Insurance in the past five to 18 months; and have not taken the maximum six weeks of PFL in the past 12 months (Employment Development Department 2019). Citizenship and immigration status do not affect eligibility for PFL benefits. Since 2004, 4.1 million family leave claims have been paid and men have filed a growing share of these claims over time (National Partnership for Women and Families 2019). Yet, only about five percent of covered workers use the program each year (ibid).

Although California has implemented a *paid* family leave program, employers are not legally required to provide paid parental leave under federal or state law.[26] Policies such as the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the California Family Rights Act (CFRA), require employers with 50 or more employees to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave (California Department of Fair Employment and Housing 2019). At the end of their leave, the employer

[24] On June 27, 2019, Governor Gavin Newson signed CA SB 83 which extends PFL benefits to eight weeks starting January 1, 2020.
[25] Since January 1, 2019, PFL weekly benefits range from $50 to a maximum of $1,252. To qualify for the maximum weekly benefit amount ($1,252) a person must earn at least $27,126.67 in a calendar quarter (three months) during the 12 months before the start date of their leave. Low-income earners who make one-third of the state average wage receive 70 percent of their wages. The weekly benefit payment amount may vary if a person receives other income (such as sick leave pay, paid time off, etc.) while receiving PFL benefits from the EDD.
[26] An employee can request, or the employer can require, that their accrued paid vacation, paid time off, or sick leave be paid out during their leave.

must reinstate them to the same job or a comparable one.[27] To be eligible for *unpaid* parental leave through FMLA/CFRA, an employee must: have worked for a covered employer for at least 12 months; have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months immediately preceding the leave; and work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees in a 75-mile radius (ibid). The New Parents Leave Act (NPLA)–passed in 2017–provides the same amount of leave for new parents who work for employers with 20 to 49 employees.[28]

Due to the concentration of Latinas/os in low-wage industries and occupations as discussed earlier, only 25 percent of Latinas/os have access to paid family leave through an employer, the lowest rate of any racial or ethnic group (Merk 2019; UnidosUS 2019).[29] Latinas/os are also the least likely of any racial or ethnic group to be eligible for FMLA job-protected leave because many work in jobs that do not meet the eligibility requirements (specifically, the lack the required number of employees) (UnidosUS 2019). In 2018, 90 percent of U.S. managers and professionals enjoyed paid leave compared to only 56 percent of service workers and 54 percent of construction and extraction workers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018).[30] Only 23 percent of employed Latinas/os work in management or professional occupations ,and yet not all of them can access parental leave (ibid).

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[27] A comparable job is one that is the same or similar in terms of pay, duties, and location.

[28] The eligibility requirements for FMLA/CFRA/NPLA exclude parents who: work for small business that employ less than 20 employees (e.g. day laborers or some restaurants); work part-time and or are seasonally employed; and who work remotely. Moreover, low-income parents who work in jobs that do not offer paid vacation, paid time-off or sick leave cannot afford to take unpaid family leave. Even if a parent is not legally entitled to time off (e.g., because their employer has fewer than 20 employees) they can still receive paid family leave benefits through the EDD. However, they will not be entitled to job-protected leave and the maximum weekly benefit amount may not be enough to cover their expenses. Racial wealth disparities exacerbate these inequalities and renders low-wage workers of color unable to take unpaid family leave thus making paid family leave is a class and racial privilege (National Partnership for Women and Families 2018). Overall, it is estimated that working families lose 20.6 billion dollars in wages each year due to lack of access to paid family leave (Merck 2019; UnidosUS 2019).

[29] Latinas/os' access to paid family leave is half the rate of Whites which is 49.7 percent.

[30] Family/parental leave can also be considered as "sick leave" or "short-term disability" under some coverage policies.

Therefore, it is not surprising that only 10 participants took parental leave. All of these fathers had children who were born in the past nine years, a possible consequence of recent state legislation and growing social acceptance and expectation of men to take family leave. Moreover, all of these respondents worked in white-collar professions, and some said their employers encouraged them to take time off. Jerónimo is a 40-year-old Salvadoran father of a one-year-old son who works in the purchasing department at a university. He was encouraged by his manager (who was a parent herself) to take time off when his son was born, so Jerónimo took "full advantage" of his employer's parental leave policy and was able to schedule his two-month leave as he saw best. The workplace culture enabled Jerónimo to take family leave without the fear that he would lose his job or that his commitment to the job would be questioned.

Other fathers, however, shared that the amount they could take was not enough because it was unpaid or their workplaces simply expected them to take a shorter amount of time. So, although parental leave was accessible, it was not the ideal. Blas, a second generation Mexican-American who works as a high school principal, was only able to take one week off "because work just demanded it." Likewise, Iker, a 45-year-old father from El Salvador who works as the senior vice-president of sales at a communications company was also able to take one week off when his two sons were born because of work commitments. Both of these men held upper-management positions which meant that their employers were unable to accommodate their families' needs because of the demands of their job titles. While some fathers took time off from work to be involved, others saw work itself as a fathering space.

When Work and Fatherhood Intersect: Male Educators and Advocates as Surrogate Fathers

Thirteen of the participants who worked in professional, white-collar jobs are educators such as teachers, principals, superintendents, and college professors. These respondents saw

parallels between how they related to their children and their students at school, particularly male students. Victor is a 39-year-old father who ethnically identifies as Mexican-American and Hungarian-American Jewish. At the time of the interview, Victor worked as the principal of a charter high school in northern California. When I asked him when did he learn he was a dad, Victor said:

> I think I began to exhibit some characteristics of fatherhood long before I was ever truly a father. I have worked in communities throughout my 18 years as an educator [where there was] a large population of young men who suffer[ed] from absentee fathers […] I still have some students to this very day, who are now 27, 28-year-old men who are fathers themselves, who still call me "pops" [who] call me "dad." So […] I feel like I have played the role of a father figure for many, for a very long time and [I] started to understand a little bit about what fatherhood is from that experience.

Victor believes that his profession grants him the opportunity to act as a surrogate father for young men and boys whose fathers are absent and this is what makes his job meaningful. His testimony also detaches fatherhood from biology ("I began to exhibit some characteristics of fatherhood long before I was ever truly a father") by placing his relationships with mentees and his children on the same continuum; both are considered fatherhood experiences.

Due to the workplace culture of the small liberal arts college where he works, Axel, a 57-year-old Mexican-Japanese-American college professor, is very much invested in his students' well-being. Drawing a connection between fatherhood and work, Axel believes that the birth of his son made a difference in his teaching. He realized that "I want my son to be treated with the upmost respect and care by his teachers which means that I have to do the same with all of my students." Like Victor, family life and work life are also on the same continuum for Axel.

Axel exhibited a fatherly demeanor when he learned that one of his male students was avoiding his girlfriend when she became unexpectedly pregnant because the male student's

father was upset that he was dating a “dirty Mexican woman.” When the male student went to see Axel during his office hours, Axel addressed the situation and told him “the point when you chose not to take precautions, you also chose to be responsible and this is bullshit […] you're going to have a child coming into the world [and] you can't walk away from that.” In this particular interaction, Axel was holding the male student accountable for his decisions to not have safe sex and subsequent avoidance of the repercussions. As an involved father, he was discouraging his student from being an absent father. Similarly, Lucas–a 50-year-old middle school science teacher–shares that his best friend’s daughter confided in him that she is a lesbian and is now acting as a mediator between her and her parents who are trying to send her to a conversion therapy camp. Like Axel, Lucas recognizes that his occupation as an educator allows him to be father figure for his students and his friends’ kids when they cannot rely on their own fathers.

Additionally, I interviewed four fathers who worked in non-profit organizations and they also express that their jobs allow them to give back to their communities and connect with young people who need positive male role models. Joshua is a 42-year-old, fourth generation, Chicano father who works with young men who have been on probation, incarcerated, involved in gangs, and addicted to drugs. Although his community work spans over two decades, Joshua says, “I still get young men [who] I worked with that come back into my life and express their deep appreciation and that's the reward.” Joshua sees his community work as family work which eventually prepared him to raise his two young sons. Fathers who work as educators or community advocates believe their work enables their fathering. However, the fact that the majority of them spoke directly about how important it is for boys and men to see them as role models and potential father-figures speaks to another dimension.

Working at Masculinity

For some fathers, work not only enabled their fathering, but it also enabled them to adhere to normative ideals of masculinity. Mauricio, a 38 year-old second-generation Hispanic father, works as a police officer in southern California and he defines financial provision as his *chief* responsibility because of his gender. He believes that, “there is only so much a female can do […] to me there is always this dynamic of what is the man bringing to the table […] and being a man, you need to provide for your family.” During his adolescence, his distant relationship with his father is one of the reasons why Jerónimo strayed away, however, as an adult, he admits that he and his father have a closer relationship. When I asked him why he thinks his father’s demeanor towards him changed, he asserts, “because I'm more responsible. He saw that I became a man […] he saw that I became responsible and was pretty much taking care of business”–and “business” was his family. Historian John Gillis (2000:226) argues that “post-patriarchal fatherhood” is the modern, middle-class, invention of “the father-as-breadwinner,” which attaches paternity to masculinity. Work, then, is not only what men do for a living, but it also has significant implications on their gender identity as men.

When I asked Bruno about his hopes and wishes for his three adult sons, he says:

> I always told them my job was to make sure that they could provide and I don't wanna sound like a male, Hispanic chauvinist, so forgive me, but that is the Latino in me and we are talking about Latinos… but to provide for their families and to be good men and if they end up being gay or whatever, I don't care, just be good men.

Bruno’s testimony raises three important issues. First, he equates being a “good man” with being a “provider” and he hopes that his sons follow in his footsteps and are providers for their families as well. Second, he reaffirms his stance on the significance of financial provision for the display of appropriate masculinity by comparing it to what is assumed to be a father’s worst fear: a son’s

queer sexuality ("if they end up being gay or whatever, I don't care, just be good men"). Bruno considers the potential failure of his sons to provide for their families as worse than being gay– a "subordinate masculinity" (Connell 2005). Third, although Bruno acknowledges his own sexism regarding his attitudes about masculinity, he justifies it as "the Latino in me and we are talking about Latinos" suggesting that the heightened emphasis on provision is a quality of being Latino and that he is simply a reflection of a cultural reality. I will expand on the racialized assumptions about Latino men and work at the end of this chapter.

The relationship between work and masculinity among Latino men can be historically traced. According to Kimmel (2012), white U.S. manhood turned away from work to recreation and leisure as alternative sites for enacting and confirming masculine worth during the mid-19th to early-20th century. For Mexicans and Mexican Americans, however, who faced racial discrimination which often excluded them from entering the workplace at all–let alone on equal terms with their white male counterparts–leisure activities were not esteemed sites for proving manhood. Therefore, "work itself was still the discursive space in which men struggled to be men" (Varon 2019:173). According to Varon, economic participation was the cornerstone of Latino men's "public manhood" at the time (171). Structural constrains have kept Latino men from living up to dominant masculine ideals; leaving them to construct alternative masculinities.[31]

The connection between work and masculinity, and its consequences on public manhood, is explicitly evident among participants who, at one point, were out of work. Carlos, a 49-year-old Mexican immigrant father who works as a welder, felt *"impotente"* ("impotent") when he

[31] Scholars have observed the construction of multiple masculinities among Latino and Mexican men including; "*jardinero* masculinity" (Hernan Ramírez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009); "regional patriarchies" (González-López 2005); "reformed barrio masculinity" (Flores 2014), "ranchero masculinity" (Smith 2003); and "Latino feminist masculinities" (Hurtado and Sinha 2016).

lost his job and his house during the last economic recession and was unable to continue providing for his family. Consequently, he experienced an identity crisis–*"yo me vine para abajo"* ("I fell down")–and started to abuse alcohol and drugs and had an extramarital affair. After his daughters organized an intervention, he got sober, reconciled with his wife, and he redefined what it means to be a good father and a good man beyond the contours of work and provision. Horacio, felt like *"el hombre más inútil de la tierra"* ("the most useless man on earth") when he lost his left hand in an accident at his workplace and was let go. Horacio felt useless because he could not work and was forced to depend on his wife's income. He asserts,*"yo nunca he sido amante de vivir de otra persona, aunque sea mi esposa"* ("I've never been keen on living off of someone else, even if it's my wife"). He felt incompetent until an employer gave him the opportunity to work despite having one hand.

Work enabled participants to adhere to normative ideals of masculinity that would render them as good, responsible, men. The connection between man-worker-father is strong enough that when men are out of work, they experience an identity crisis, suffering acute emotional and psychological distress. Ongoing structural changes in the U.S. economy, like deindustrialization, will continue to leave increasing numbers of men out of work; who can no longer sustain households because they cannot find suitable employment or are working service-sector jobs which do not pay enough. Therefore, we will continue to see more men confront these challenges head on and hopefully, the tie between man-worker-father can finally be disentangled. While the fathers discussed in this section view work as an empowering force for their fathering, they are not oblivious to the costs of work on their family life. The majority of fathers are quite aware of the compromises that they have to make in their private lives for the sake of work.

"*Les Damos Todo, Pero No Les Damos Nada*" ("We Give Them Everything, But We Don't Give Them Anything"): Work *Obstructs* Latino Men's Fathering

Many fathers saw work as something that hindered their fathering. In recent decades, Latina mothers' employment has risen. Latino fathers are now increasingly not only financial providers, but also emotion-laden nurturers who spend more time with their children and inculcate values. In the United States, however, they find themselves in "hyper employment," as shown earlier, exacerbating tensions. The Latino fathers I interviewed spoke about their struggles in navigating these tensions. Although his job has given Santino, a 47-year-old construction worker from Peru, the ability to provide his family a house in the suburbs, he maintains, "it has a lot to do with the time you spend with your family and for us [in construction], as much as we want to do that, sometimes you can't, because you are working so many hours and you're always sitting in traffic." Not only is construction physically laborious and hard on the body, but the long commute from Riverside to Los Angeles County depletes Santino of energy, keeping him away from enjoying the little time he has with his family. In California, and across the United States, people are increasingly spending more hours commuting to work. In the last 27 years, round-trip commute times for U.S. workers has increased, from 43 minutes in 1990 to 52 minutes in 2017 (Carter 2019). Rising housing costs in urban areas (where the jobs are located) coupled with stagnant wages and the lack of efficient infrastructure for public transportation are some of the key forces behind rising commute times.

Jorge, a 58-year-old maintenance worker at a university campus, recalls an altercation with his youngest adult daughter where she accused him of not being a responsible father. Jorge admits he was not involved with his children when they were younger because *"en aquellos años […] yo tenía tres trabajos [y] mi esposa tenía que llevarme a los dos más chiquitos al lugar en donde yo trabajaba porque no los miraba"* ("in those years [...] I had three jobs [and] my wife had to take the two youngest to the place where I worked because I wouldn't see them"). When

he would get home from work, the children would be asleep and he worked on weekends too, which limited his time with his family as well. Jorge thought he was being a responsible father by working three jobs to support his family. His daughter, however, disagreed because he was not spending any time with her or her siblings. Parents and children experience family life differently and they often have different expectations of each other (Baca Zinn and Wells 2000). His daughter's accusation *"me hizo sentir mal"* ("made me feel bad"), but he also knew she was right. Jorge realizes:

> *Uno como padre, quiere darle lo mejor a sus hijos. Y qué hace uno, se la pasa trabajando. Se le olvida a uno estar con ellos, compartir con ellos y demostrarles que estás ahí con ellos. Siempre quise estar con ellos, pero la necesidad de trabajo era grade que hay veces no estaba.*
>
> As a father, one wants to give the best to his children. And what does one do, they spend all of their time working. One forgets to be with them, to share with them and show them that you are there with them. I always wanted to be with them, but the need to work was great that sometimes I was not there.

Jorge identifies a key contradiction in "responsible fathering" (Doherty *et al.* 1998). As a father, he desired to give his children everything–or which he described as "the best"– but to do so as a Mexican immigrant man with a fifth grade-level of education, he had to work multiple jobs. Work took over his time and energy. Jorge laments the past, but he is cognizant that his lack of involvement in family life was not entirely his choice.

Although Pedro, a 54-year-old fork-lift operator for a construction company, has always defined financial provision as his only paternal responsibility, he spoke about his regret in having done so now that his only daughter went off to college. He shares:

> *Cuando nació [mi hija], en ese entonces, había que trabajar mucho para pagar la casa y [uno], por darse por el trabajo, pasa más tiempo en el trabajo que en la casa. Yo decía, "hay que trabajar porque teníamos que pagar la casa." Pero también, no tenía tiempo*

> *para ella. Yo trabajaba los sábados y domingos y cuando no trabajaba, mejor me iba con mis amigos a tomarme unas cervezas o a ver el juego. Cuando [mi hija] creció le dije a [mi esposa] un día, "creo que se me fue el tiempo y no disfruté a mi hija."*
>
> When [my daughter] was born, at that time, you had to work hard to pay for the house and, for giving oneself to the job, [one] spends more time at work than the home. I would say, "I have to work because we had to pay for the house." But also, I didn't have time for her. I worked on Saturdays and Sundays and when I didn't work, I would go with my friends to have some beers or watch the game. When [my daughter] grew up I told [my wife] one day, "I think my time has passed and I did not enjoy my daughter."

For these reasons, Pedro credits his wife for why their daughter is the first person in both of their families to go to college. He asserts that Mexican immigrant fathers like him, "*venimos a este país a trabajar, no venimos a tener lujos; a trabajar para que ellos estén bien [pero], ya ve, les damos todo, pero no les damos nada, lo más importante*" ("come to this country to work, we don't come to have luxuries; to work so that they are well [but], you see, we give them everything, but we don't give them anything, what is most important"). For Pedro, what is most important for a father to give to his children is love, but work takes time away from spending time and demonstrating a form of love and care that is beyond providing the means to live.

The Contradictions of Work and Family: Transnational Fatherhood

The testimonies of two transnational fathers (Justino and Rodrigo) who are separated from their families by borders strikingly illustrates how work obstructs men's involved fathering. Transnational fatherhood, or "cross-border fathering" (Navarro 2008), is not a new phenomenon, but a recurring experience of Latino migrant workers in the United States. In her groundbreaking study, *Abrazando El Espiritu: Bracero Families Confront the US-Mexico Border*, historian Ana Elizabeth Rosas writes, "the Bracero Program compelled husbands, sons, and fathers to leave their families and experience loneliness and hardships thousands of miles from home" creating

transnational families in the process (24). Justino and Rodrigo adhere to the "financial provider" role and they migrated to the United States to provide but they also they migrated to father. Their sense of duty to their families compelled them to migrate to the United States, yet the compromise requires them to be away from their children. Similar to the fathers Sánchez (2017) interviewed, Justino and Rodrigo explained their presence in the United States by highlighting their identity as fathers who had no economic resources and limited employment opportunities in Mexico.

Seventy-two-year-old Justino works as a day laborer and community organizer in Los Angeles county. During his disagreements with his wife about his recurring plans to return to Mexico and subsequent postponements, Justino says, *"si no estuviera aquí, si yo no aportará la cuestión económica, sería muy difícil arreglar la situación allá; no hubiera podido resolver su situación médica"* ("if I were not here, if I didn't financially provide, it would be very difficult to fix the situation there; I would have not solved her medical situation").

Although Justino wishes to return to Mexico City to see his family who he was not seen for 13 years, he cannot because of unexpected family emergencies or expenses that compel him to stay in California to work to cover the costs. Work enables Justino's fathering, but since he is working in the United States without papers, he cannot easily return and be with his family when they need him; making him feel guilty. Two days before the interview took place, Justino's youngest son died in a freak accident at work. Wiping his tears from his eyes, Justino takes a deep breath and says, "*ahí es donde digo yo, 'bueno, ¿Qué más voy a tener que soportar para seguir estando aquí*?'" ("that's where I say, 'well, what else am I going to have to endure to stay here?'"). Although Justino takes refuge in knowing that he has helped a lot of people as a community activist (e.g., by helping undocumented immigrants obtain a driver's license) during

his time in the United States, he still feels a sense of remorse about not being there for his family beyond being a *"padre de cheques nomás"* (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994).

Rodrigo migrated to the United States only eight months before the interview took place; leaving his wife and two daughters in his home state of Sinaloa, Mexico. He works as a dishwasher in two different restaurants in Santa Clara county, and he speaks with his daughters almost every day by phone. Rodrigo shares that his daughters, *"me extrañan mucho. Cuando hablo con ellas [me] dicen que me extrañan mucho [y] que ya me vaya allá con ellas"* ("they miss me a lot. When I talk to them [they] tell me that they miss me a lot [and] that I should go back with them"). Hearing his daughters pleas, Rodrigo feels *"un poco triste por estar tan lejos de ellas"* ("a little bit sad because I am so far away from them"). He explains his migration as:

> *Una situación que no es por gusto, sino por una necesidad económica que es muy difícil de estar. Es muy difícil economicamente […] trabajar en un lugar lejos. Es difícil porque uno trabaja lejos para poder superarse económicamente, pero la vida se siente más difícil.*
>
> A situation that is not for pleasure, but because of economic necessity that is very difficult to be in. It is very difficult economically [...] to work somewhere far away. It is difficult because one works far away to be able to overcome oneself economically, but life feels more difficult.

Rodrigo's testimony unveils a key contradiction, central to the impact of men's employment on their familial lives. Although Rodrigo's employment in the United States is alleviating the economic hardship of his family in Mexico by ensuring his family's economic survival, family life has become more difficult since he is now away from his daughters who remind him of his absence every time they speak on the phone. Employment was supposed to make life easier, not harder.

In her ethnographic study on Mexican transnational parenting, Dreby (2006) finds that fathers' relationships with their children are dependent on demonstrating their economic success as migrant workers. Fathers believe that "an honorable way to provide for their families is to migrate to the United States where they earn more for their labor" (54). Justino and Rodrigo left their families in search of better economic opportunities to fulfill their responsibilities as fathers. Although they may be experiencing some level of economic success, compared to what they would have been earning in Mexico, they are feeling a sense of loneliness and, to some extent, guilt for not being with their families. The prospect of reuniting with their families is limited since they are both undocumented and, although they have made plans to return to Mexico once they have managed to earn certain amount of money, both men expressed a certain level of uncertainty that day would come soon. Interestingly, the majority of participants (54 of 60) had grown up with fathers like Justino and Rodrigo who were mostly absent from the everyday experiences of family life because of they were working. These experiences motivated these participants to do things differently with their own families.

Remembering their Fathers as "Workers" or "Providers"

The majority of the Latino fathers that I interviewed reflected on the quality of their relationships with their own fathers and recognized that work prevented them from getting to know their fathers in a deep, intimate way. However, they still admired their fathers' work ethic and it was a source of respect. Miguel, a 45-year-old working-class Mexican father, recalls:

> *Mi papá trabajaba desde las 9 de la mañana a 10 de la noche [...] Yo no recuerdo haber recibido un consejo de mi padre [...] Mi padre era más reservado digamos así; él no lloraba y siempre nos inculco a nosotros qué los hombres, la frase que él decía, "los hombres no lloran, no más llevan el diario"; queriendo decir que sólo traemos el dinero a la casa.*

> My dad worked from 9 am to 10 pm. I don't remember ever getting advice from my father. My father was more reserved, let's say. He didn't cry and he always instilled in us that men, his phrase was, "men do not cry, they only provide the income"; meaning that we only bring the money to the house.

The primary lesson he learned from his father was how to work hard and that work ethic was an integral part of his manhood. Agustín's dad also "worked a lot so he was hardly around." He identifies his father as "an older Mexican man" who "grew up probably even worse and had a worse relationship with his father" which is why he has been "intentional about being present in [his children's] lives."

Gabriel, a 47-year-old Chicano father, draws a distinction between physical and emotional presence in order to understand his own father. His "dad was busy a lot. He is a performer–actor– and was doing a lot of things on the road and so he was... I don't want to say he was absent... He was maybe absent physically but not at the heart level." Like Gabriel and Agustín, many of the participants hesitated from completely blaming their fathers for their shortcomings, rather they tried to understand them by bringing attention to how they were raised "back in the day." In doing so, respondents acknowledged that men's "hyper-employment" and commitment to financial provision alone was part of a "cycle"– or a "*cadena"*– that men in their families succumbed to but unlike the men of previous generations, they had "choices." Although they somewhat understood their fathers' absence as a structural problem, they concluded that the solution was making different individual choices.

Fathers Clock out Work to Clock in Family Time

Fathers conveyed that they wanted to "break the cycle" of overworking and being absent from their children's lives because they had been affected by the absence of their fathers. However, the respondents who had the means to attempt any changes were mostly college-

educated, working professionals. These fathers altered their work schedules and ambitions for their children and for their partners many of whom who were also working professionals. Fathers are either taking days off to spend with their families, not working overtime, or they are turning down job offers and interviews because it would increase their work hours and stress.
Despite having a college degree, Agustín, a 33-year-old second generation Mexican-American father of two preteens, works as a self-employed handyman because of the work flexibility. He discloses:

> Early on, when they were younger, I made those mistakes of working too much. A few years ago, I caught myself and I just stopped working that much. I realized that money and work means nothing... I'm going to finish my life and realize that I wasted time that I am never going to get back no matter how much money I make.

He had this epiphany when he saw the film, "Click" in which the male protagonist (played by Adam Sandler), is a father who misses his children's lives because of work demands. During the interview, Agustín spoke about his family's recent financial difficulties, but he continues to stand by his choice to work for himself because his family is "worth it."

Likewise, Mátias, a 39-year-old executive who works at Starbucks Corporation, worked almost 60 hours per week during the first six to eight years of his children's lives. He "was trying to make sure [his children] had everything that they needed. I felt like that was enough." At the time, he was working as the general manager at a different company that paid him well, but the workplace environment was not the best at supporting working parents. He was missing parent-teacher conferences, soccer games, and music recitals because of work. One day, he went in to his superior's office and he told him, "I'm only going to work 40 hours a week take it or leave it because I need to be with my family." When I asked Mátias what motivated him to put his job on the line for his children, he said:

> When you get so caught up in work and you are overworked and when you feel underappreciated like all this work and you're still complaining and you're still not happy; like nothing I ever do is going to make you happy. So, why am I putting my family at risk for someone else?

Mátias' superior acquiesced and he allowed him to cut down his work load to 40 hours per week, although he would later leave the company due to sexual orientation discrimination. As the general manager, Mátias had the power to challenge the workplace culture and demand changes in his work schedule, something that most fathers I interviewed lacked.

Some fathers also considered the impact their work lives had on their partners, especially those who had careers. Alfonso, a 35-year-old Salvadoran father, tells me that he stayed in his current job as the director of admission at a university in southern California despite being offered a job in Oregon because he is "very respectful of my wife's successful career." His wife works for a global entertainment corporation and he recognizes that "she is in [a] field were not that many women work and the fact that she's a woman of color… she's Latina, which makes her a very, very rare individual in her office." Understanding that Latina executives experience "triple oppression" (Segura 1984) in the workplace, Alfonso thought it would have been "insulting" of him to ask his wife to move for *his* career, forcing her to restart *her* career. Alfonso's *testimono* is consisted with past research on feminist-identified Latino men who emphasized collaboration, connectedness, and equality in their personal relationships with women (Hurtado and Sinha 2016).

Additionally, I interviewed three participants who at one point were stay-at-home fathers and they discussed how spending time at home allowed them to forge close connections with their children, which at times caused conflict with the mothers of their children. Gabriel recalls when he had the opportunity to work for the city which was primarily work he could do from

home. He would "visit school sites every now and then to look at how they were doing arts integration and, at that point, I became a stay-at-home dad." When I asked him if it was difficult for him to stay-at-home with his children while his wife worked, he said:

> I love my wife and I love my family and it wasn't, I don't know that it was ever a feeling of like 'aha! Men can do it too'. It was never like that for me. I think I felt the amount of love that I had for my family and it was what I needed to do [at that time].

For the first five years of his children's lives, Cesar, a 71 year-old Chicano activist father, stayed home and worked in the evenings. Cesar maintains, "I put a lot of energy into my kids and hopefully they will realize that what I did for them is something that they need to do for their own kids." Men who chose to cut down their workload (or opted out of the labor market at one point) are redefining provision to mean emotional provision. Beyond the contours of financial provision, they are providing their families emotional support and forging closer connections through more open communication. This re-framing supports Edin and Nelson's (2013) observations that a relational model of fatherhood has emerged which overemphasizes loving, friendly relations with children, meaningful communications, and quality time.

Work obstructs Latino men's involved fathering and fathers respond in a myriad of ways. Although participants understand the problem of work and its implications of family life, they believe individual fathers can implement changes in work lives to break the *"cadena."* This neoliberal approach leads fathers to monitor other fathers when they are failing to be involved.

Are You a "Working Father" or a "Father who Works"? Monitoring Other Men's Fatherhood

Some Latino fathers use work as a way to monitor other men's fatherhood and this is based on class and age. Many middle-class, professional working fathers (especially educators) who had access to parental leave and had greater work flexibility were critical of fathers who

were not visibly invested in taking care of children or who did not attend parent events at school. They read those actions as stereotypical since it is commonly assumed that Latino men are all about work and nothing else.

Latino male educators, in particular, are the most critical of Latino fathers who, in their eyes, are putting work above their involvement in their children's schooling. Rogelio, a 46-year-old second generation father who works as a high-ranking school administrator, claims, "the stereotype that the dad has to be at work all the time, doesn't make time to participate in any of the activities, that is still prevalent in our culture." In this view, Latino culture, then, is the reason why fathers are overworking and are not involved in their children's lives. Rogelio is not the only one who shares this sentiment. Overall, 25 participants attributed Latino men's employment practices and their lack of involvement in family life to culture rather than the structure of the U.S. economy. Sociologist Maxine Baca-Zinn (1981;1982), identifies the overreliance on culture without considering institutions or structure to explain Mexican American's social position as the most serious problem in the social science literature. Here, participants themselves are using cultural stereotypes to explain why Latino fathers are not involved in family life and they point to individual solutions as remedies. For example, Rogelio elaborates that Latino dads:

> Don't know that you can ask for time off work. Saying, 'hey, I got to go to my kid's award ceremony, give me an hour? Give me 30 minutes' [or] whatever time […] that is one of the stereotypes that continues, is 'I can't go *mijo*, I have to go to work'. Well, yeah that is true, but you can also ask for 30 minutes. You can always make it up at the end.

Rogelio assumes that all workplaces are amenable to workers asking for time-off to be with their children. Furthermore, not all fathers and especially undocumented fathers are able to ask for time-off because they are vulnerable and unprotected. He also assumes that all fathers work near their homes and their children's schools, when in fact, working people are having to commute

longer hours to work. "Making it up at the end" may not also be possible for fathers who are having to juggle multiple jobs. While several fathers rely on culture to explain Latino men's fathering practices, others adhere to neoliberal ideology: Latino fathers are choosing to overwork and not be involved without their children and families.

Rafael is 35 years old and he works as the maintenance personnel at a charter high school in Santa Clara county. At the time of the interview, there had been numerous reports of heightened gang activity and violence primarily in the working-class Latina/o community where the school is located. For Rafael, *"todo lo que está pasando ahorita en esta ciudad es porque los papás no están enfocados en sus hijos; están enfocados en el trabajo y no le ponen atención a los niños"* ("everything that is happening right now in this city is because parents are not focused on their children; they are focused on work that they do not pay attention to children"). Rafael blames individual working parents for their children's delinquent behavior without considering the effects of rising housing costs in Santa Clara county due to the booming tech industry, stagnant wages, defunding of after-school programs, and hyper-policing of Latinas/os on the community. Given the socioeconomic standing of Latinas/os discussed at the beginning of this chapter, coupled with the economic transformation of the area, parents have to work a lot longer hours or hold multiple jobs just to get by.

Focusing more on fathers, Saul, a 33-year-old divorced father of nine-year-old son, chastises Latino men for thinking that "if they just give [their children] a place to live and something to eat is enough […] that just by working is enough." He elaborates that such senseless thinking is futile since "kids need their time and dedication and help and guidance. They don't just need a place to sleep and food, but they need someone to guide them step by step." Despite his two-hour roundtrip commute to his worksite in San Francisco, Saul coaches

his son's soccer team, attends school activities, and spends time with his son, which factors in his assessment of other fathers who fail to do the same.

Furthermore, almost all (57 of 60) fathers characterized their own fathers or other older men who had children (e.g., their spouse's father) as "old school" or "traditional" when comparing their parenting techniques to their own. One way respondents were able to "discursively distance" (Bridges and Pascoe 2014) themselves from "the provider" archetype was to call those who continued to maintain primary commitment to work rather than family as "old school," which allowed them to embrace the belief that they were to be adhering to modern fathering.[32] Jerónimo believes that he is more involved in his son's life in comparison to his own upbringing because "my dad went to work, he put food on the table, [he was] very old school [and] very traditional." He is grateful for the way his father raised, but he believes he "need[s] to be more involved [with his son] when it comes to sports, education, etc."

Likewise, Rudy, a 54-year-old corporate consultant, identifies his father, father-in-law and brothers-in-law as "traditional machos" who are solely breadwinners and expect women to take care of everything else in the home. He considered himself as someone who is "cut from a different cloth" vis-à-vis his male relatives. Rudy points to individual traits, such as personality, and culture to explain what differentiated his trajectory from those close to him. Townsend (2002) finds that when men become fathers themselves, they are compelled to reconsider and reevaluate their own fathers. I am finding a similar pattern but with a different goal– to perform the ideal of the "good father" (and, advertently, the "good man"). Men's work commitments are

[32] Bridges and Pascoe (2014:252) argue that contemporary hybrid masculinities "create space between men and hegemonic masculinity while reiterating gendered relations of power and inequality." It is a process in which men point to other men, while exonerating themselves, as the "real" culprits in perpetuating gender inequality. Here, some Latino fathers, point to other Latino men as culpable in perpetuating the stereotype of the uninvolved, "macho" father who fiercely identifies solely as a breadwinner and worker.

up for grabs since fathers use it as a way to define their own fathering in a positive light. This "discursive distancing" (Bridges and Pascoe 2014) serves to perpetuate the neoliberal claim that men simply choose not the be involved in their children's lives and that it has little to do with the fact that paid employment is not organized to support parenting more generally.

Conclusion

Paid employment works in contradictory ways for the Latino fathers I interviewed; it validates and undermines their efforts to adhere to the new hegemonic ideal of the "involved father." Work enables their fathering–through financial provision– as they are able to provide their families a middle-class life while, simultaneously performing appropriate masculinity. Workplace cultures that support Latino men's family leave and industries, such as education, that encourage fathering behaviors as part of the job are also enabling participants' involved fatherhood.

On the other hand, work obstructs Latino men's fathering. Hyper-employment depletes fathers' time and energy and in the case of transnational fathers, work physically removes them from the home for extended periods of time. Participants recount the impact of work on their own relationships with their fathers, motivating mostly middle-class, professional working fathers to change their own relationships to work. Lastly, men's work commitments are used to monitor men's adherence to the ideal of the "involved father." While work certifies "good" responsible fathering it can also function as evidence of "bad" uninvolved fatherhood. Given their positionality in the economic structure, Latino fathers have to work harder than their white counterparts to make ends meet and they mostly work in industries that lack flexibility and access to parenting resources like family leave. Therefore, Latino fathers are caught between a rock and a hard place: financial provision makes for a good father, but overworking (due to the

racial wage gap and labor market segregation) makes for a neglectful one. Many of the participants' work lives began when they were children, which calls attention to the way variations in the social construction of childhood may figure into these men's current conceptions of fatherhood. In the next chapter, I focus on Latino men's childhoods to reveal how their childhood experiences affect their parenting and their gendered sense of self-worth.

III. “I Want Him to Grow Up Feeling Safe”: Latino Fathers and the Social Construction of Childhood

When I told my father that I wanted to interview Latino fathers for my dissertation, he was concerned, *“pero, Fátima, nadie va a querer hablar contigo. Nosotors no somos muy platicadores”* (“but Fátima, no one is going to want to talk to you. We are not very talkative”). Although I took my dad’s warning into consideration, I was still determined to talk to Latino fathers. At the beginning of the interviews, the majority of fathers were nervous, shy, and reticent. I became worried and I started to think, *maybe my father was right?* However, when I asked them questions about their upbringings and attitudes about childhood in the United States, the men became animated, talkative, and confident. In fact, many fathers apologized for “going off topic” during these moments in the interview. The interviews were transformed from an awkward and restrained talk between two strangers into an open and lively dialogue. The fathers with whom I spoke shared intimate, often painful, details about their upbringing and they related their childhood experiences to their fathering. All of them wanted to give their children a better life and a “better childhood.” Their *testimonios* raise an important issue: the invention and the social construction of childhood.

In modern U.S. society, children are viewed as “sentimental” or “priceless” (Zelizer 1985) who need special protection and care; a viewpoint that differs from pre-industrial and industrial U.S. society. Children are now seen as *social agents* who have talents, perspectives, and are capable of making their own *individual* decisions. Childhood, however, varies by time, place and social location (Baca Zinn, Eitzen, and Wells 2016). How do Latino fathers describe their childhoods? How has the construction of an “ideal” U.S. childhood changed in the last century? What are the social forces that shaped Latino men’s childhoods? How are these dynamics manifested in Latino men’s parenting? In this chapter, I argue that the denial of an

idealized childhood compels Latino fathers to value the "pricelessness" of their children. Their abilities to parent "priceless" children, however, is mediated by the interlocking structures of race and class. First, I will draw from the sociology of childhood to provide a brief overview on the social construction of children in U.S. society; drawing parallels to conceptions of childhood in Mexico. Second, I will discuss how Latino fathers' childhood experiences relating to work, discipline, and sexual violence challenge the social construction of an ideal U.S. childhood, particularly boyhood. Third, I will assess how Latino fathers' understandings of their childhoods influence their sense of self-worth and their faith in themselves as good fathers. Lastly, I will examine the tension between Latino fathers' desires to give their children a "normal" childhood and their fears of spoiling their children. Fathers' attempts to negotiate this tension–between indulging the "pricelessness" of their children without promoting their "idleness"– is a process I call *the concerted cultivation of natural growth.*

The Creation of Modern U.S. Childhood

Childhood is a social construct. Our understandings of childhood and the meanings that we place upon children vary considerably from culture to culture, but also significantly within the history of any one culture. Previous discourses on children include: the "evil child," "the innocent child," "the immanent child," the "naturally developing child," and the "unconscious child" (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998). These discourses, however, assume the existence of a "universal child" and regard childhood as a natural rather than a social phenomenon (Jenks 1996) or a structural form (Qvortrup 2009).[33] Although children have always existed, the conception of childhood has not.

[33] The structural perspective, first proposed by Danish sociologist Jens Qvortrup, is based on three assumptions: (1) childhood constitutes a particular structural form; (2) childhood is exposed to the same societal forces as adulthood; and (3) children are co-constructors of childhood and society. See Qvortrup, Corsaro and Honig (2009) *The Palgrave Handbook of Childhood Studies* for a thorough critique.

In his classic study, *Centuries of Childhood*, Phillipe Ariès demonstrates the gradual rise of the idea of childhood as a distinct phase of life in western Europe starting in the 13th century.[34] In Mexico, children were not just part of households, they were essential to daily practices, the construction and transmission of social identity, and household economic success (De Lucia 2010). However, as families became increasingly private, and as work and domestic life was reorganized, attitudes about children changed.

Sociologist Viviana Zelizer (1985) documents the profound transformation in the economic and sentimental value of children between the late 19th and early 20th century in the United States. She observes the emergence of the economically "worthless" but emotionally "priceless" and sacred child. Children were no longer seen as "miniature adults" who need harsh discipline but as sacred beings in need of protection, education, and care (Ariès 1962; Baca Zinn, Eitzen, and Wells 2016; Zelizer 1985). According to Mexican historian Alberto del Castillo Troncoso (2010), the emergence of a modern urban concept of childhood in Mexico is closely linked to the beginnings of the modern educational system taking place during the *Porfiriato* period (1876-1911). The Porfirian modernization of Mexican childhood involved the creation of stereotypes that linked innocence and purity to elite groups; civic education; the rise of pediatric medicine and child pedagogy and psychology; the expansion of various institutions devoted to the care of children; and the visual reportage of child participation in labor conflicts in Mexico City's newspapers and magazines.

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[34] The "idea of childhood" is an awareness of the particular nature of childhood, which distinguishes a child from an adult. As soon as a child was no longer physically dependent on their parents or guardians– typically by the time they were five years old– they were part of adult society and took on adult-like responsibilities. Between the 16th and 17th centuries, Ariés saw a progression from no conception of childhood, to coddling, and then to a period where childhood was considered as a time for discipline and preparation for adulthood. Ariés' arguments, however, have been debated largely due to his overreliance on paintings as his only primary source to produce a grand theory on childhood. For a review of these debates see Corsaro (2015) "Chapter 4: Historical Views of Childhood and Children."

Popular culture of the post-World War II era helped construct the conception of childhood innocence. People became preoccupied with childhood innocence as a way to create a protected and sheltered childhood in the face of the Cold War (Mintz 2010).[35] The "priceless" and "protected" child, therefore, should be insulated from adult realities for as long as possible. Childhood was considered a time of play and adulthood was a time of seriousness. Remnants of this sentimental ideal continue to inform what the majority of people in contemporary U.S. society would define as a "normal" childhood.

Since the early 1970s, the notion of a "prepared" childhood has *partly* supplanted the notion of a "protected" childhood (Lareau 2011; Mintz 2010; 2012). Far from being sheltered from reality, children now need to be prepared from a very early age for the future challenges they will face.[36] According to historian Steven Mintz (2010:145), "we no longer regard children as the polar opposites of adults [and] we no longer regard children as innocent and unknowledgeable." On the contrary, contemporary U.S. society is highly conscious of children's physical, emotional, and cognitive development and well-being and experts who specialize in these various aspects of childhood are constantly sought after. The tension between these two conceptions of childhood–"protected" and "prepared"–is explicit through the cultural logics of childrearing that stress the "concerted cultivation" of children, which middle-class parents use

[35] U.S. culture sought to shield children from adult realities during the Post-WWII period. In his analysis of American popular films, Mintz (2010:146) illustrates that in the 1950s, "a profusion of child-oriented films—such as Treasure Island, Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan, Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier, and Old Yeller—advanced the notion of childhood as a stage of asexual innocence, fantasy, and carefree adventure."

[36] The post-industrial period is marked by people's anxieties over the next generation's "declining fortunes" (Newman 1993). Headlines that read, "today's children are the first generation that will be worse off than their parents" amplify fears of an unstable economic future. The notion of the "prepared child," which places a significance on developing children in a variety of ways to enhance their future possibilities, is a social response to these uncertainties that mostly middle-class families are able to adopt.

versus to the "accomplishment of natural growth" that working-class parents adopt (Lareau 2011).

Not all children, though, are protected and or prepared. Not all childhoods are created equal. Childhood is interrelated with other structural categories like race, class, and gender. Lareau's (2011) analysis shows how institutional standards (like those in schools) give middle-class children an advantage over their working-class peers due to the unequal ways that the cultural practices of middle-class homes pay off in public settings. Ferguson (2000) addresses institutionalized forms of identity policing in schools to highlight how Black boys' (mis)behavior is not excused as childish naivete, but understood more generally as intentional and manipulative in nature; a process she calls "adultification." Likewise, López's (2012) research on the impact of Latino boys' "racially" stigmatized masculinities on their educational outcomes demonstrates the disparity in Latino children's schooling experiences. Estrada's (2019) ethnography goes behind the scenes of the popular street food market in Los Angeles to underscore the central role of Latinx children's labor in making these small businesses thrive.

Examining families in a transnational context, Dreby (2010) acknowledges the struggles (and successes) of Mexican children, whose parents migrated to the United States, to live up to their end of the "immigrant bargain." González-López (2015) shares the life stories of men and women in Mexico whose lives were forever transformed by childhood and adolescent incest. Approaching childhood as a structural form that is interconnected with other structural categories like race, class, and gender across national contexts, provides us a more nuanced understanding (and appreciation) of children's lived experiences. Latino fathers' childhood experiences and how they influence their fathering behaviors add to our critical understanding of childhood.

Challenging the Modern U.S. Childhood Ideal

"It was Always Work, Work, Work": Working to Provide as Children

On a sunny spring afternoon, I met with Santos, a 38-year-old second generation Mexican-American father, at a coffee shop in Riverside county. During the interview, I asked him if he saw himself raising his children similarly to how his father raised him. Hearing my question Santos giggled and said, "in a way but not the exact same way." When I asked him to elaborate, he spoke about working with his parents as a child. Santos worked alongside his parents in the informal sector; selling pillows and comforters they made at local swapmeets and, later, as *yarderos*[37] buying second-hand items, fixing them up, and reselling them. As far as Santos can remember he:

> Always did stuff to help the family out so it was always work, work, work […] but I didn't have, I guess, a childhood. I mean I had one, but it was working with my family […] and I wanted something different for my son and my daughters.

Santos did not have a "normal" childhood in which he was free of any economic responsibilities and the absence of experiencing an idealized childhood shapes his overall approach to parenting.

Of the 60 Latino fathers who I interviewed, 22 worked when they were children to support the economic survival of their families. All of these fathers are of Mexican-descent, 18 are first-generation, and 15 had grown up in rural communities in Mexico and the United States.[38] When I asked participants if their sisters also worked or were expected to work outside of the home for their family's financial well-being, they all unanimously said no. In the previous chapter, I discussed the connection between work and masculinity for adult men as fathers. Here,

[37] A *yardero* is a Spanglish term that denotes someone who earns money by repurposing the items they purchase at yard or garage sales and reselling them for a profit.
[38] The Mexican immigrant fathers who worked as children are not alone in their experiences. In 2019, there were more than 3.2 million working children in Mexico ("El Heraldo de México" 2019). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics does not have an age restriction for children who work with their parents and they only record the employment rates of independently working people over the age of 16 (Estrada 2019).

the gender socialization of work is a social process that differed for participants when they were boys from the girls in their families. The boyhoods of these 22 Latino men were shaped by the institution of work challenging the modern ideal of an economically "useless child" (Zelizer 1985).

In the United States, child labor is highly condemned and often framed as a major social problem in developing (often labeled "backward") nations.[39] Dutch anthropologist Olga Nieuwenhuys (1996:246) notes "the disassociation of childhood from the performance of valued work is considered a yardstick of modernity." According to Zelizer (1985), the battle between the proponents and opponents of child labor legislation during the era of U.S. industrialization was intensified by the imprecise and ambivalent cultural definitions of child labor. Defining which types of labor were "exploitative" or "legitimate" was the subject of fierce debates. Child labor (e.g., factory and agricultural work) was replaced by child work (e.g., house-work, acting, specific apprenticeships) since the later was seen as not interfering, but rather "enhancing" children's education. A paradox, therefore, emerged: the value of children's labor (especially in many farm and working-class families) enhanced at the same time that they were legally banned from employment in order to attend school and partake in play activities (which a growing number of middle-class children were already doing) (Mintz 2010; Zelizer 1985)

Moreover, child wages were replaced by weekly allowances (a middle-class invention) which children receive "in recognition of the fact that they are full members of the family" (Zelizer 1985:4). Zelizer notes that while the money that parents gave to their children was considered "safe" money, money earned by children was stigmatized by reformers as

[39] This discourse is used to support a "culture of poverty" perspective on Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and Mexican culture. A popular assumption about Mexican fathers is that they value work above education and the high school drop-out rates of Mexican-American children (particularly, boys) is used as evidence to support this claim. See Noguera, Hurtado and Fergus (2012) for a critique.

"dangerous" money because it granted children a degree of economic independence from their parents (104). Allowances, on the other hand, were considered "educational money" (105). In her ethnography on Latinx children working as street vendors in Los Angeles, Emir Estrada (2019:10) observes that it is "more acceptable when children work to gain experience and earn a little bit of pocket money and less so when they do it to help with the family's economic survival."

Lauro, a 42-year-old Mexican immigrant father who grew up in a *pueblo* (small town) in Jalisco, Mexico, started working when he was 12 years old. Once he started working to help his family, Lauro was unable to continue his schooling and he dropped out of school when he was in sixth grade. Lauro's first job was being a delivery boy for a company that sold drinking water. He remembers:

> *En ese tiempo, yo manejaba una motito y llevaba 24 garrafones. ¡Y tenía 12 años! Y me acuerdo que la gente se reía porque me miraban muy chiquillo y en una motito andaba.*
>
> At that time, I drove a little motorcycle and I carried 24 jugs. And I was 12 years old! And I remember that people would laugh because they would see me as a very small kid and I was driving a motorcycle.

Lauro also recalls that customers would invite him into their homes to have lunch because they thought it was odd that a 12-year-old boy was delivering (and carrying in) heavy water jugs. Lauro did not keep the money he made as a delivery boy; instead he gave it to his mother to help cover the household expenses. He was not an apprentice working to enhance his own education, but was an active contributor to his family's household income. Lauro conveys:

> *Yo le ayudaba a mi mamá a comprar le a mis hermanas juguetitos para regalarles para Navidad [...] Todo el tiempo, cuando estuve [en México], yo le ayudé. Todo el tiempo que trabaje, le daba dinero a ella.*

> I helped my mom buy my little sisters toys to give them for Christmas [...] All the time, when I was [in Mexico], I helped her. The whole time I worked, I gave her money.

None of the fathers who worked as children kept the money to themselves. Instead, they gave their mothers their wages since their mothers were usually the ones who were responsible for calculating household expenses and making ends meet. None of the fathers received *domingos* (allowances) either. Recently, Lauro's fifteen-year-old daughter told him that she wanted to start working to help cover the household expenses. Lauro was delighted that his daughter expressed an interest in working but he also discouraged her from doing so because it would distract her from her schoolwork. Although Lauro was proud about his work experience and his ability to support his family during his childhood, others had different sentiments.

Benito is a 65-year-old Mexican immigrant father of three adult daughters who grew up in a *rancho* (ranch) in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. His desire to raise his children in a system that was *"un poco más decente"* ("a little bit more decent") is one of the reasons why he migrated with his family to a city in the United States. A "decent" system for Benito means living in a place where children do not suffer and are treated with respect and kindness. Benito shares:

> *Yo viví tiempos muy terribles en el rancho. Desde muy chiquito, ya me traían sembrando. Me acuerdo que me caía y pos "parece"; no iban a chiquearlo a uno. ¡Parece! ¡Órale, siémbrele!*
>
> I lived very terrible times at the ranch. From a very young age, they already had me sowing the field. I remember that I would fall and it would be "get up"; they wouldn't go and comfort you. Get up! C'mon, sow!

Benito believes his childhood experiences of working in the field stem from growing up as boy in a rural place. The gender socialization of boys is guided by the conventional expectations that they are rough, tough, and risk takers, and to successfully instill these expectations means

withholding comfort from boys (Adams and Coltrane 2008). Telling a boy to get up and stop crying when he falls and hurts himself is about "toughening" him up. During these moments, however, Benito did not feel stronger or protected. He maintains, *"el rancho es diferente a la ciudad. En la ciudad, yo pienso que hay menos trabajo y menos sacrificio"* ("the ranch is different from the city. In the city, I think there is less work and less sacrifice"). Benito and his wife made the decision to migrate to a foreign country in order to protect their children from having to work in similar conditions which entails great personal sacrifice.

Franco also remembers his childhood as hard and painful. He is a 62-year-old working-class father who was raised in a large family of nine children in a small rancho in Zacatecas, Mexico. Although Franco went to school until the sixth grade, his father would take him out of school periodically when he needed help sowing the field. At the age of seven, he was in charge of leading the pack of horses that wore a *yunta* (yoke) while dragging the plow which planted the seeds for the next harvest. Although Franco helped his father on the field, sometimes it was just too difficult to sustain a household of 11 people, so his father *lo rentaba* (would rent him off) to neighboring families. Franco describes this labor system as:

> *Sí otro señor necesitaba un niño para ayudarle a sembrar, entonces, esa es la renta. Te prestaba y tenías que irte con ese señor a otro cerro o a otro rancho y no mirabas a tus papás entre uno o dos meses. Tenías que vivir con ellos [...] lo mas difícil era no mirar a mi mamá ni a mi papa.*
>
> If another man needed a child to help him plant, then that is the rent. He would lent you to him and you had to go with that man to another hill or another ranch and you wouldn't see your parents for one or two months. You had to live with them [...] the most difficult thing was not seeing my mom nor my dad.

Franco's sisters did not participate in this labor system. In the majority of homes, chores like cooking and cleaning are usually given to girls, whereas more active jobs like sowing the field

are typically assigned to boys. According to Adams and Coltrane (2008:191), "girls' chores usually take place inside and emphasize taking care of other people, whereas boys' chores usually take place outside and emphasize the maintenance of things." Mexican feminist anthropologists, Vizcarra Bordi and Marín Guadarrama (2006) also observed a similar pattern in Mazahua rural households. By examining children's participation in the economy of subsistence across three generations, they found that "older generations associate boys to productive activities such as "la milpa" (the field), and they associate girls with reproductive activities such as "la casa" (the house)" (39).

Angel feels that he lived his childhood and adolescence *"muy rápido"* ("very fast"). Angel, a 39-year-old Mexican immigrant father, also started working from a very young age to help support his mother who was a single parent raising three kids. He was nine years old when he started selling *paletas* (ice lollies) in the neighborhood. Since he was the oldest child, he also helped his mother take care of his younger siblings. Angel says:

> *Yo era el encargado de mis hermanos. Tenia que ayudarle hacer el que hacer a mi mama, tenia que darles de comer, tenia que estudiar, me acostaba muy tarde, a veces nos quedábamos sin cenar.*
>
> I was in charge of my siblings. I had to help my mom with the house work, I had to feed them, I had to study, I would go to bed very late, sometimes we were left without food.

As boys, these fathers acquired a sense of responsibility and work ethic that one usually acquires in adulthood in a modern, post-industrial society. They worked for the economic survival of their families not for their own educational development. Unlike the "economically useless" child who is automatically given money and recognition in the family because they exist, these fathers became full-fledged members of their families by working and providing for their families. Although some were proud that they had earned this status and respect, others lamented not

experiencing the "carefree" childhood that other boys experienced. Interestingly, none of the fathers said that they wished their children had similar experiences. On the contrary, some (like Lauro) actively discouraged their children from working before they were adults because *"se empiqan en el dinero y se les olvida la escuela"* ("they get too involved in money-making and they forget about school"); echoing earlier opponents against children's wages.

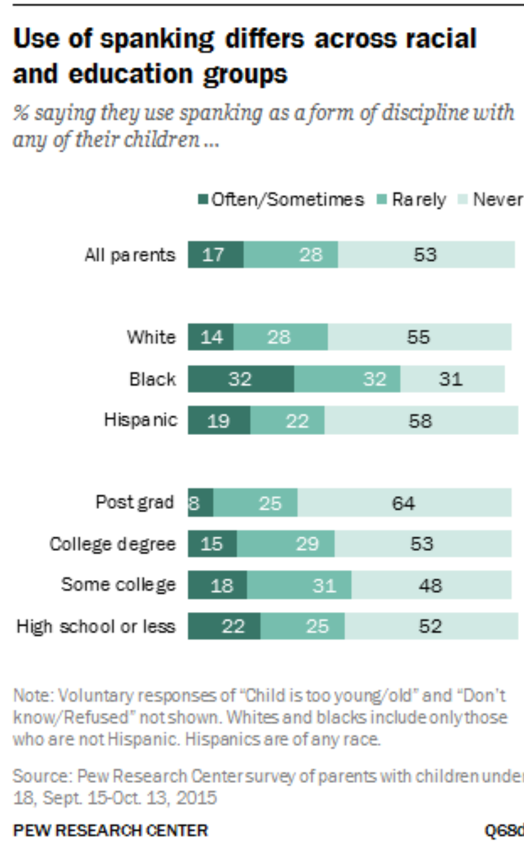
To Spank or Not to Spank? That is the Question: Latino Fathers and the Issue of Discipline

The issue of discipline, specifically corporal punishment, was prominent in my interviews with Latino fathers. The traditional gendered division of labor in parenting frames fathers as sources of discipline (Townsend 2002). Questions of whether corporal punishment is a form of child abuse and whether spanking is effective or not has been widely and fiercely debated (Coltrane and Adams 2008; Giles-Sims, Straus and Sugarman 1995; Straus and Stewart 1999). Sociologist Murray Straus (2008:1314) defines spanking as a form of "primordial violence" because being struck by parents is "almost always a child's first experience with violence." Although this form of violence exists in middle-class and upper-class environments, there is bias in which families are reported. Officials (e.g., doctors, teachers, police) are more likely to report a poor or working-class family that is suspected of child abuse than a middle-class family (Coltrane and Adams 2008; Straus and Smith 1990).

Spanking is a widely used social practice: nine out of ten parents use spanking and they consider it as legitimate and acceptable behavior (Baca Zinn, Eitzen and Wells 2016). According to the Pew Research Center (2015), spanking differs across racial and education groups. Black parents (32%) are more likely than white (14%) and Latina/o (19%) parents to say they sometimes spank their children. Latina/o parents (58%) are more likely to say the never spanked their kids than white parents (55%). Regarding educational attainment, about one-in-five parents

with a high school diploma or less say they sometimes use spanking as a method of discipline, as do 18 percent of parents with some college and 15 percent of parents with a Bachelor's degree. Only eight percent of parents with a post-graduate degree say they often or sometimes spank their children.

Table 1: Spanking Across Racial and Education Groups[40]



Fourteen fathers admitted that they have spanked their children at one point in time. On the other hand, 33 fathers disclosed that they did not use spanking to discipline their children. Fifty-four participants recalled being physically disciplined when they were children by their parents, most notably by their fathers. Out of the 14 fathers who used spanking, seven were

[40] Source: Pew Research Center (2015) "Parenting in America."

middle-class, highly educated, professionals and seven were working-class, non-college educated, fathers. Although there were no apparent class differences in terms of who used corporal punishment, there were more middle-class fathers (N=21) who did not spank than working-class fathers (N=12).[41] In terms of age, 16 of the fathers who did not use spanking were under the age of 40. There were slight differences, however, in terms of generation-since immigration. Out of the 14 fathers who have spanked their children: seven were first generation, five were second generation, and three were third generation. In order to justify their practice of corporal punishment and to avoid possible accusations of child abuse, fathers provided two types of explanations: (1) their children were not spanked as *harshly* as they were when they were children and (2) their children were not spanked to the same *degree* as they were when they were children.

For example, Jorge differentiates between two types of corporal punishment *"pegar y golpear"* ("spank and abuse"). As adults, his children–especially his youngest daughter–have held him accountable for how he disciplined them when they were younger. During one altercation with his daughter, Jorge defended his behavior by saying: *"si yo los tratara como a mi me trataron, me odiarían ahora mismo"* ("if I treated you how they treated me, you would hate me right now"). When Jorge was boy, he would often delay coming home:

> *Porque me iban a golpear y no me iban a pegar con la mano, sino con un cinto, o con una reata. Inclusive había días que dejaban la reata en el tanque de agua para ser más fuerte.*
>
> Because they were going to hit me and they were not going to hit me with the hand, but with a belt, or with a rope. There were even days when the rope was left in the water tank so that it could be stronger.

[41] This finding supports previous studies which show that parents of lower levels of education are more likely to use physical punishment (Lareau 2011; Simons *et al.* 1991)

Although Jorge was abused by his father, he does not resent him. In fact, Jorge believes some corporal punishment might have been justified, just not so excessively. With his own children, he rationalizes his use of spanking as being less harsh and more humane.

The quality of Angel's relationship with his eldest son was influenced by his turbulent relationship with his stepfather. Angel was very animated and he kept eye-contact with me throughout the interview until this subject came up. Angel lowered the volume of his voice and started to look down at his hands when he said:

> *Mi hijo el mayor fue muy golpeado por mi [el participante pausa]. Lo golpe mucho, no de golpearlo feo, pero le daba nalgadas, le gritaba y así pasaba. Eran lapsos, eran momentos en los que yo le hacia eso a mi hijo. Pero de repente yo me sentía mal, y decía, "¿porque lo hice?".*
>
> My oldest son was badly beaten by me [the participant pauses]. I hit him a lot, not very harshly, but I spanked him, yelled at him and that is how it happened. They were lapses, they were times when I did that to my son. But suddenly I would feel bad, and I would say, "why did I do it?".

Angel started to attend church services and took parenting classes to understand why he was treating his son this way which led him to reflect on his own relationship with his stepfather. Although Angel did spank his second son, it was not as harshly or to the same degree as he did with his first son. Interestingly, Angel has never physically disciplined his daughter. Other fathers also acknowledged gender differences in how they disciplined their children. Previous research shows a similar pattern in which parents use more physical discipline with their boys than with their girls (Lytton and Romney 1991).

When his adult daughter was young, Lucas spanked her, but not to the same degree as his mom spanked him. When their only child was born, Lucas and his wife agreed that they were not going to use corporal punishment. Lucas admits, however, that he spanked his daughter "maybe

three times." As a child, Lucas' mom used to physically discipline him a lot. Although he chose to raise his daughter differently, Lucas maintains that his mom's strategy "also worked for me [because] sometimes we needed our ass beat by our mom." Like Jorge (who I mentioned earlier), Lucas rationalizes his own experiences of being physically disciplined as "necessary."

Natalio, a 58-year-old father from El Salvador, confessed he only spanked his youngest daughter once when she was six years old. Natalio conveys:

> *Agarre una ropa interior y le hice así [mociona balanceando la ropa] a ella y pego un grito como que le había pegado con un palo, pero no, fue simplemente el hecho por que nunca les había pegado.*
>
> I grabbed an undergarment and I did this [motions swinging the garment] to her and she screamed like I had hit her with a stick, but no, it was simply the fact because I had never hit them.

Natalio, Lucas and several other fathers disclosed their use of corporal punishment in the same manner: first, they claimed they never spanked their children, but later they confessed hitting their children, adding the caveat "only a few times." The "controlling image" (Collins 2000) of the authoritarian Latino father who uses corporal punishment to discipline his children is dominant in U.S. society and it influenced how participants shared their stories in the interviews. In contemporary U.S. society, spanking is socially frowned upon even though there are many parents–of all racial, social class, and generational groups–who still hit their children. In their efforts to perform the ideal of the "good father" who does not hit their children for the interviewer (who is seen as a professional) and to distance themselves away from the "authoritarian father," participants deployed the "I have never hit my kids… but only a few times" response as a way to merge these two goals while also being honest about their childrearing practices.

Fathers relied on their personal histories of corporal punishment, educational and professional training, and community engagement to explain why they chose to discipline their children differently. Dante, a 37-year-old Chicano single father, was physically disciplined when he was younger. What bothered him, however, was that he "wasn't told, you know, why I was getting my ass whooped or something like that, you know. It was more like 'sas, sas, sas' and that was it." Consequently, Dante does not spank his eight-year-old son and when he does discipline him, Dante takes time to explain to his son why he is being disciplined. He draws on his experiences as an activist working with diverse community members as a blueprint on how to communicate with his child. Dante reveals that this practice is "forcing me to explain more because that wasn't done with me."

Likewise, Benjamín, a 37-year-old second generation Mexican-American father, is conscious of how he disciplines his daughter. Benjamín describes himself as an impatient person and he has learned from his daughter that "you can't rush a kid, you know. She's six years old and when she's trying to put things in her purse, you have to give her time to do that." Although his daughter has tested his patience on numerous occasions, he says, "*no la voy agarrar a cintarazos*, you know. *No la voy a golpear. No le voy a decir malas palabras por que* that's not me" ("I'm not going to hit her with a belt, you know. I am not going not hit her. I'm not going to say bad words to her because that's not me"). Benjamín also acknowledges that he learned how to have more patience and communication with his daughter from his wife because she would never tolerate corporal punishment.

Many of participants who did not use corporal punishment indicated that their wives had compelled them to use alternative methods of discipline. Additionally, three of these fathers–who only had daughters–implied that they did not physically punish their daughters because it was not

appropriate given their gender. Therefore, they would defer to their wives who they thought were more qualified to discipline their daughters because *se entienden entre ellas* (they understand each other). Nicolás, a 44-year-old Salvadoran middle-class father, was spanked when he was a child and he "would be okay with spanking but [my wife] is not." Nicolás tries to negotiate the tensions between maintaining the agreement he made with his wife on not using corporal punishment and his own personal experience:

> I think spanking, like any punishment, is not positive by itself. But if it's added with something else, the love, the care, the "I love you" that's important, the "do you know why this is wrong?" That's more important to me than spanking or time outs […] I have friends that will tell me, "yeah, if my parents didn't spank me, I wouldn't be where I'm at; like I needed that."

Nicolás echoes other fathers' strategies of explaining to their children why they are being disciplined. Nicolás, however, sees the possibility of mediating the negative effects of spanking by couching it with more communication and verbal expressions of love which is a perspective that Emmanuel shares.

Emmanuel, a 49-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant father, remembers being physically disciplined once by his father. His reflection of this experience, however, is a positive one. He knew his father loved him *"por que me corrigió […] Me corrigió y bien merecido lo tenia. Pero supe que su cariño estaba ahí, porque me corrigió"* ("because he corrected me […] He corrected me and it was well deserved. But I knew that his love was there, because he corrected me"). Emmanuel maintains, *"aquel que ama a su hijo, lo corrige"* ("he who loves his child corrects him"). Although Emmanuel does not physically punish his children, he has shouted at them. Joshua, on the other hand, finds this dynamic "weird." When he was a child, his dad also used to "beat" him, but he would "later come down and apologize to me and tell me he

loved me." Once he became a domestic violence counselor, Joshua realized that this approach of "I hit you, because I love you" was bizarre and unhealthy.

There are three issues to note in the discussions I had with Latino fathers about *not* using corporal punishment. First, a recurring theme among participants is their justification of their own personal experiences of being physically punished as "necessary." The ideas that "spanking is why I am where I am" and "my parents loved me that is why they spanked me" are also evident among fathers who have spanked their children at one point in time. These sentiments reflect a deep-seated cultural acceptance of spanking (Straus 2008) which is in tension with the "dominant set of cultural repertoires" (Lareau 2011) of proper parenting that are promoted by professionals. These standards include the importance of talking with children and reasoning with children and teaching them to solve their problems through negotiation rather than with physical force (ibid).

Second, interviews support previous research that show women as mediators between fathers and their children on matters of discipline (Adams and Coltrane 2008; García 2012; Townsend 2002). Here, women were highly involved in men's decisions about whether or not to spank, and in some cases, women's preferences overruled men's inclinations to physically discipline their children. The gender of the children is also significant as fathers who only had daughters felt they were not qualified to discipline their daughters so they deferred to their wives on these issues. Through these dynamics, the gendered division of labor in parenting is reified and mothers are given the additional responsibility to determine the appropriate boundaries of discipline.

Third, although 33 fathers did not use corporal punishment to reprimand their children, 20 of them have shouted at their children, particularly at their sons, when they have misbehaved.

These fathers recall moments when they used the tone and volume of their voices to communicate disapproval in lieu of hitting their kids. Ricardo recognizes that he has a lot more patience with his daughter than he does with his son. When she throws tantrums, Ricardo is "fine" but he is "the opposite with my son. I don't know if I have higher expectations… again the machismo might be there, but for some reason I expect a lot more from him." When it comes to behavior, Ricardo has higher expectations of his son than he does of his daughter even though his son is two years younger than his daughter.

Similarly, Oscar was also tougher with his ten-year-old son than with his two younger daughters until his wife brought this discrepancy to his attention. His wife warned him that if he continued to verbally discipline his son in this way, "he's going to hate you for life." Joshua has also lost his temper with his three-year-old son on more than one occasion. For Joshua, the hardest part of being a parent is:

> Being able to control my own emotions so that I can be a better example and teach him how to control his emotions; to discipline or redirect [him] in an appropriate and effective way.

Regardless of how they disciplined their children, participants conveyed a desire to be better parents and to give their children a better childhood. No one said they enjoyed spanking or shouting at their kids. No one wanted their children to fear them the way they feared their own fathers (who were usually the ones who spanked them). Even those who did spank maintain that their children still have it better than they did at their age. After all, if they had talked back to their fathers the same way their children have talked back to them, there would have been severe consequences.

Their decisions to spank or not to spank their children are informed by their own personal experiences, professional and educational training, and attitudes about childhood. All fathers

recounted moments when they lost their patience or when they have struggled to maintain composure and refrain from anger. Participants conveyed how "easy" it is for men to resort to anger during these moments. Some were tougher on their sons than on their daughters because 1) they felt they were capable to discipline their sons versus their daughters, and 2) they saw it as *their* responsibility–not the mothers'–to correct their sons' behaviors because their sons will grow up to be men. The gendered division of parenting on issues of discipline, though, is not a matter of individual choice, but part of a whole gendered system of division of labor. The scholarly and policy debates on spanking are a product of the changing views on children and childrearing which shape how fathers approach discipline and negotiate its tensions.

"Be Quiet and Never Say Anything": Latino Fathers' Histories of Sexual Violence

I interviewed three fathers who confided in me that they were sexually assaulted when they were boys. They shared very painful details about these encounters and they admitted that they engaged in very risky behaviors like promiscuity and substance abuse after these violent episodes occurred. By examining Mexican men's experiences of incest and sexual violence within the family, González-López (2015) illustrates how emotional, verbal, and bodily intrusions to instill a sense of "heteronormative compliance" normalizes, justifies and can lead to sexual violence against boys who do not adhere heteronormative expressions of gender and sexuality.[42] Although queer or effeminate boys experiences these intrusions more intensely, González-López argues that heteronormative compliance can be strategically used to exercise power and control over any boy.

[42] Heteronormative compliance refers to the beliefs and practices of obedience established by parents, siblings, and other relatives for the purposes of monitoring and reproducing heterosexuality as the norm in families and society in general. See González-López (2015), "Chapter 5: Men's Life Stories."

Leonardo, a 25-year-old father of two girls, did not have a "really good" childhood. He mostly lived with his grandparents and his grandfather was an alcoholic who physically abused Leonardo's grandmother. Leonardo was molested by his stepfather as a child. Although he wanted to tell his mother about the abuse, his stepfather threatened him: "he reminded me that if I ever told my mom, he would shoot her in front of me with a shotgun he had in his closet." Up until the interview, Leonardo had never told anyone about these experiences and was unsure about whether he should or should not share these stories with his daughters when they are older.

When Angel was 13 years old, he was sexually assaulted by a 23-year-old woman who used to give him a ride to work. After the assault happened, Angel said,*"me senti muy mal"* ("I felt very badly"). Consequently, he stopped going to work and when his mother asked him why he did not want to go to work anymore, he told her he wanted to change jobs. Angel, however, was afraid:

> *Tuve miedo porque era un niño de pocas palabras, morboso, creado en la calle y con mucha gente sin mucho respeto, sin mucha educación. Me acuerdo que fue muy duro para mi.*
>
> I was afraid because I was a child of a few words, morbid, raised in the streets and I was around many people who didn't have much respect, without much education. I remember that it was very hard for me.

This experience shaped Angel's understanding of his sexuality. He reveals that from this moment up until he met his wife, *"empecé ha tener muchas relaciones sexuales muy fácilmente"* ("I started having a lot of sexual relationships very easily"). Angel opened up about his experiences with his oldest son before he started his freshman year in college and has slowly started sharing other details of his life with his children.

Aáron, a 50-year-old Mexican Indian father of three adult daughters, was five years old when he was sexually assaulted by a male family friend when he was visiting at his

grandmother’s house. Some of the neighbors walked in during the assault and they told Aáron “to be quiet and never say anything.” Aáron believes the neighbors killed the man because after they beat him up and took him away in their car, the man was never seen again. He shares:

> I locked that up for years and again coming from a Hispanic family, there were some things that really hurt a lot, you know, “don't say anything.” So from that point, I didn't realize how much I had closed up and I stopped talking.

Like Angel and Leonardo, Aáron started drinking alcohol (which later developed into abuse), smoked marijuana, and became sexually active at a young age in order to cope with trauma. The effects of their traumas were amplified because they felt they could not tell anyone about what happened to them. They did not experience a “carefree” or “protected” childhood. On the contrary, they were stripped from their “childhood innocence.”

“Don't Take Away ‘Being a Kid’ from the Kids”: Redoing their Childhood with their Kids

Fathers spoke about how they tried their hardest to give their children a better childhood which consisted of having more love, trust, openness, communication, and access to resources than what they had. For fathers, “being a kid” means feeling loved and wanted, not having to worry about whether there is enough food to eat or if the rent will be covered that month, being happy, carefree, having toys or gadgets to play with, and being treated like people who have choices and can make their own decisions. In other words, fathers wanted their children to enjoy an “emotionally priceless” and “protected” childhood because they were barred from it. These discussions mostly took place when I asked participants if they always wanted to have kids and if so, why? Silva and Pugh’s (2010:614) respondents framed parenthood as a second chance to prove that they “knew better” than what their life experiences convey and that they were honorable people. For the fathers I interviewed, fathering also held a redemptive promise for

them to show that they knew better than their own parents and that by providing their kids an idealized childhood, they are indeed good fathers.

Before Marcial became a father, he thought "if I were to ever have kids, I would teach them things that I wasn't taught, or not treat them the way I didn't like to be treated." As a child, Marcial was seen but not heard so he lets his daughters make their own decisions when it comes to how they want to dress or what toys they want to buy because he ultimately does not want to "take away being a kid from the kids."

Immigrant fathers frame their decisions to migrate as a way to give their children "a better life." Horton (2008) examines how the normative Western discourses of "lost" or "ideal" childhoods motivated Latina mothers to migrate to the United States. She argues, "global flows of media, goods and people have spread bourgeois images of a commercialized childhood that plays a large, though understudied, part in precipitating and sustaining global migrations" (926). Because he grew up in dire poverty, Carlos "*les compraba mis hijas [todo lo que querian] y mi esposa me decía 'no, les vas hacer mal' pero yo quería darles todo lo de que niño yo no tuve [en México]*" ("I bought my daughters [everything they wanted] and my wife would tell me 'no, you are spoiling them' but I wanted to give them everything that I didn't have [in Mexico] as a child"). When Carlos lost his business, he could not continue to give his daughters the ideal, which affected his youngest daughter the most. Carlos explains:

> *El primer día que tuve [dinero], quise darles todo. Todo les di y ya cuando no pude… les hice mal a mis hijas. La niña mas chica se me andaba cortando las venas porque yo la mal puse y cuando no pude ya, ellas se sintieron feo.*
>
> The first day I had [money], I wanted to give them everything. I gave them everything and when I couldn't…I did wrong by my daughters. My youngest daughter ended up cutting her veins because I spoiled her and when I couldn't anymore, they felt badly.

Mátias always knew he wanted to have kids. He was raised by his grandmother because his parents were addicted to drugs and were in and out of sober living facilities. He shares:

> I always felt like I could do a good job as a parent because I didn't have everything that a child should have [and] I knew what kids would be missing if they didn't have a parent.

Since Mátias grew up in a home where there "wasn't a whole lot of love," he has been thoughtful about how he expresses his love for his children and how he builds trust between them. He believes that "even though you are someone's parent, they don't always know they can trust you." So, when his kids were younger, Mátias did a trust exercise with them:

> I asked them, "do you know what bad words are?" And they said "yes" and so I said, "okay well tell me what the bad words are." And they were a little scared, so I gave them a paper bag and I said, "you get to say all of your bad words into this paper bag and you get 30 seconds to say them. You are not going to get in trouble."

Once they said the bad words into the paper bag, Mátias would have them throw the bag in the trash in order to illustrate that foul language was not acceptable in the home. Mátias eventually did this exercise with his children once or twice a year. This exercise marked a "turning point" in his relationship with his kids because they "began to trust me even more." His kids trusted Mátias in a way he wished he could have trusted his own parents.

Celestino, a 30-year-old father of two, also wishes he would have grown up in a more loving home. In his home, "little boys weren't allowed to cry." As a father, he does not want his kids to share his experiences so he is intentional about telling his children, "it's okay to be angry. It's okay to cry, but just know I am here for you and I love you." Celestino is trying to support his kids' emotional intelligence, something he wishes his father would have done for him. Alfonso's father was a "raging alcoholic" whose behavior while intoxicated "cost a lot of tears." Consequently, Alfonso, does not drink though he is open to having a conversation with his son

when he is of age to let him know “this an option. You can do this socially, but there are consequences that come with exploring these type of experiences.”

Gerado’s father was “tough with his sons and there was a lot of pain.” His father had high expectations of his sons which did not include emotional expressiveness. Gerardo, a 49-year-old second generation Chicano, was a sensitive boy which did not please his father. As a result, Gerardo grew up not feeling accepted by him which is why, now, he is intentional about creating a space, “a trusting space,” for his son so that he can be whoever he wants to be and feel accepted. Similarly, Dante wants his son to “grow up feeling safe […] that he is safe to be who he wants to be and I think that is the big difference between my parents and I.”

Safety is a recurring wish of the fathers I interviewed. Fathers want their children to feel safe, something they did not feel when they were boys. They want their children to feel physically, emotionally, and mentally safe and these are important elements in redoing their childhoods with their kids. They want their kids to feel safe coming to them when they have made a mistake without the fear of being physically reprimanded. They want their kids, especially boys, to feel safe expressing their emotions aside from anger. The growing awareness of mental health in contemporary U.S. society is exemplified by fathers who are under the age of 40 and or who have children under the age of 18. They are *highly* concerned about the mental well-being of their kids. This is not to say that older fathers and fathers who had adult children are not concerned about their children’s mental or emotional health. Rather, the cultural discourses about children’s emotional and cognitive development are more widespread and accessible now than when older fathers were young and had young children. Overall, fathers expressed an existential longing for a “normal” childhood and a major parenting goal was to

have their children experience this ideal. However, fathers expressed apprehension about whether they were doing right by their children.

"We All Felt that We Were Baggage Instead of Kids": Latino Fathers and their Sense of Self-worth

Many of the fathers remembered feeling ashamed at some point in time when they were children. Fathers felt stigmatized when they lived in dire poverty with their families; when they had to stop going to school because their families could not afford to keep them enrolled; when they were physically reprimanded by their parents; when their schoolmates or other neighborhood boys told them they could not play with them because they did not have the nice toy cars, clothes, or soccer balls like they did; when they realized that their families did not adhere to the ideal nuclear family; when they were sexually assaulted and, afterwards, silenced; and when they were treated differently because of their skin color. For some participants, the feeling of shame lingered for a longtime. When I asked Cristian, a 71-year-old Mexican immigrant father from Guadalajara, Jalisco, about his childhood, he prefaced his answer by saying *"en otros tiempos me daría pena hablar de eso. Pero ahora no porque sé que no fue mi culpa"* ("in other times, I would be ashamed to talk about it. But not now because I know it wasn't my fault").

For a number of fathers, feeling shame also meant feeling unloved and unwanted. Samuel is a 49-year-old, middle-class, Mexican immigrant father who still vividly remembers how his skin color shaped his childhood experiences living in Michoacán, Mexico. Samuel grew up feeling ashamed because he was:

> Born of dark complexion in a village where everyone is of European complexion. Being hidden from your mother, from her friends, because she is feeding me. But, it is not really because she's feeding me, it's because I'm the only one who is not *güerito* (light- skinned).

Looking back on his childhood, Samuel now realizes that his classroom seating charts in elementary school mirrored Mexico's class, gender, and racial hierarchies. Samuel always sat on the right side of the classroom, towards the back, near the end of the last row alongside another boy who was from a very poor family (his family would give the boy his old uniforms because the boy's family could not afford them). Samuel "was the darkest and [the boy] was the poorest." They were also known as "*los dos mas burros"* ("the two dumbest"). He also notes that all of the female students were seated on the opposite side of the classroom. While he remembers this social arrangement, Samuel's voice breaks and says, "every year, that is how far we made it."

As an infant, Joshua was raised by several extended family members and family friends until the age of five when his aunt and uncle adopted him. His biological father died when he was three years old and his mother committed suicide due to post-partum depression. Growing up, Joshua felt uneasy about his life history. He explains, "there was always the looming question in the back of my head, am I really loved? Or am I just a burden? Or are they taking care of me because they have to?". Feeling like a "burden" is something that Oscar can relate.

Oscar describes his childhood as "rough" and it became tougher when his dad lost his job due to a workplace injury. Having lost his job, Oscar's father completely isolated himself further away from his family. Growing-up in a low-income, predominantly Latina/o community, Oscar also saw his friends' parents face similar hardships. He conveys:

> We all felt that we were baggage instead of kids because we couldn't help [my dad]. [My siblings and I] couldn't help him with the struggle that he was going through. So like most of my friends, we felt we were baggage. We felt that we were baggage at one point because of the adversity that our parents faced.

His childhood experiences of feeling like "baggage" inform Oscar's overall view of childhood: "no kid deserves to feel miserable." Emotional well-being is characteristic of an ideal, carefree, and protected childhood. Children growing up in families living in marginalized and

disenfranchised communities (like Oscar and his friends), though, do not have access to opportunity structures that would enable a carefree existence. For the majority of participants, their personal histories of not feeling emotionally “priceless” fueled their desires to give their children everything they longed for, performing the ideal of the good father in the process. This practice, however, produced a concerning contradiction.

The Concerted Cultivation of Natural Growth: Negotiating “Pricelessness” and “Idleness”

Santos, who I introduced earlier, is apprehensive about whether he has done the right thing by protecting his children from experiencing the struggles he endured as a child. At the time of the interview, his son’s grades were declining and was recently involved in a fight with another boy at his middle school. As a result, Santos became stricter with his son regarding his school work and even gave him a list of chores to do around the house. In protest, his son tried to justify his poor school performance by saying “I'm enjoying my childhood” to which Santos responded, “Your childhood!?” Although his wife had previously told Santos that he should give their son more responsibilities around the house, he always used to say “no, let him relax. Let him have fun. Let him do his homework and just focus on that [because] he's a kid and I didn't have that growing up.”

Several fathers share Santos’ concern about whether they have made a mistake in raising their children differently–with more freedom of expression, less responsibilities, and more material luxuries. Fathers who had children under the age of 18, specifically, were concerned that their children were becoming spoiled, ungrateful, and disconnected from their family’s history of intergenerational upward mobility. They were also concerned about their children’s overreliance on technology. In other words, fathers are worried that the (over)sacralization of

children and the commodification of childhood has enabled their children to become disrespectful, entitled, self-indulgent, oblivious, and apathetic of other people's struggles.

Fathers were nostalgic about a time when children would spend hours playing outside in the backyard or in the neighborhood and parents would have a difficult time trying to get them back in the house. Now, as Santino said, "you can't even get them out of the house" because they are watching television, playing video games, and or using the computer or their cell phones. According to Mintz (2010:145) contemporary concerns about children's play is due to the "sharp decline in the birthrate, the rebirth of feminism, the emergence of intense parenting, the growth of new electronic technologies, and heightened concerns for children's well-being." The free, unstructured, outdoor play that Santino and other fathers miss has declined significantly and it has been replaced by solitary play and adult-supervised activities (Mintz 2010; Lareau 2011).

Mauricio enjoys taking his children to visit their extended family in Mexico because it is a way for his kids to reconnect with their cultural roots and nature. These trips are also rich opportunities for his children to "realize how important relationships are." In the rancho, Mauricio maintains, "you have to depend on your relationship with other people" to survive. Comparing life in the rancho with life in a U.S. city–with access to technology–Mauricio laments:

> I think we have lost a connection with people as a whole […] even though I can't tell you that iPads and iPhones don't make our lives easier. But, how often do you sit there and show up to a meeting, and everybody has their iPhones instead of talking to each other about how was their weekend. I think we have lost that […] and for me, it is important for my kids to see me going down there [to the rancho], helping my cousins out because you have to be something positive for the community.

Iker, a 45-year-old middle class father from El Salvador, believes children's idleness today is partly due their parents' desires to be their friend. It is okay to have fun with children,

"but, they also need a parent." Like Mauricio, Iker believes technology is not alleviating, but intensifying the problem:

> A lot of [kids] just grab a cell phone and kind of go into their own world, you know and they don't communicate and they don't participate in life and I think that is really bad.

Fathers like Iker and Mauricio are concerned that children today are *too* individualistic and self-involved. They also argue that technology–particularly cell phones–is escalating the problem. Andrés, a 51-year-old Chicano artist and community organizer, fears that the easy access to social media through cell phones is causing anxiety among young people, like his daughter, because now they have "access to *everything all the time*." He believes that the immediate access to news stories and social media posts is desensitizing young people because the overstimulation "polarizes them, they can't even move, they can't function." Anthropologist Sharon Stephens (1995) argues that the fears of a "crisis" in childhood emerged in the 1970s during a new phase of global capitalism. The symbol of the "endangered child" personified modern fears that the market was encroaching upon previously uncommodified spheres of social life, like intimate relationships.

To contest their children's rising sense of entitlement which they believe is damaging their children's abilities to empathize with others and maintain their humility, fathers engage four strategies: 1) they remind their children about their family's history of intergenerational upward mobility; 2) undocumented fathers draw on their documentation status to convey the privilege of citizenship to their U.S.-born children; 3) first generation fathers draw on their life experiences in Mexico and El Salvador in order to show their kids that their childhood in the U.S is not universal; and 4) fathers with a Chicano political consciousness aim to pass on the value of "speaking for others when they cannot speak for themselves" onto their children.

One of the values that Benjamín is trying to instill in his young daughters is humility. He realizes that his daughters are going to "grow up having a lot of things that we didn't have as kids just because we grew up poor and so I want [them] to know that [they are] very lucky." He and his wife have spoken with their eldest daughter on several occasions about the privileges she enjoys growing up middle-class. Unlike his daughters, Benjamín grew up moving between two border cities on the Mexico-U.S. border during the 1980s and "back then people didn't do […] the things that we do just because *no tienen el dinero* (they don't have money)." Benjamín does takes his daughters on family trips to Disneyland, swimming classes and *ballet flokorico* lessons, and to the local parks during family events which his parents never did with him and his older sister.

Felipe, a 39-year-old Mexican immigrant father, also hopes that his children grow up to be humble adults. He began to worry, however, that his eleven and eight-year-old sons were becoming inconsiderate and disrespectful when they started to speak English between each other in front of him and their extended family who only speak Spanish. He tells them:

> *Si van hablar inglés, que sean con las personas apropiadas pero cuando hay gente que habla español me cae mal que sean así porque hay gente que no entiende.*
>
> If you are going to speak English, let it be with the right people but when there are people who speak Spanish, I don't like them being that way because there are people who don't understand.

Felipe makes them aware that speaking English is a privilege and that they should not use this privilege to make other people feel excluded.

In efforts to help his nine-year-old son remain humble, Saul draws from his experiences as an undocumented immigrant. He tells his son:

> You a huge advantage by being born in this country, because there are people that live here who don't have papers and there are some

> people that make fun of those who don't have papers. They make racist comments and that's bad […] You have to be humble because there are people who don't have documents and they're still worth a lot.

By teaching the value of humility, Latino fathers of young children are trying to undermine the sense of entitlement that develops among children when they are given *everything* and have no frame of reference to understand the "struggle."

Octavio grew up very poor in Oaxaca, Mexico. During their family trips to Mexico, Octavio never missed an opportunity to tell his children about how lucky they are to live in the United States. When they would see children walking on their way to school, he would say:

> *Miren cómo vienen los niños con sus libritos aquí porque no tienen mochila y con huaraches. Así pasó conmigo. Yo tenía pantalones que estaban rotos aquí y mi mamá les ponía un parche así. Yo no tenía zapatos como ustedes qué cada rato andan cambiando de zapatos. No, yo no estuve así cómo están ustedes porque así es en México.*
>
> Look at how children are walking with their books here because they don't have a backpack and with sandals. That happened to me too. I wore pants that were ripped here and my mom would put a patch on it like that. I did not have shoes like you, constantly changing shoes every time. No, I was not like how you are now because that is how it is in Mexico.

During these conversations with his kids, Octavio was trying to make two points: his kids are privileged in ways that he was not at their age and their childhood is different from other children's childhoods and they should appreciate what they have. For Gabriel, it is important that his children are compassionate and empathetic. Drawing from his Chicano political consciousness, he has passed on the ethic of *In Lak'ech*, which is *"tu eres mi otro yo"* ("you are my other me") to his children.[43] He has told his children, "when you feel that feeling, when it

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[43] *In Lak'ech i*s a Mayan-inspired poem from Luis Valdez's collection, *Actos, Bernabé, and Pensamiento Serepentino.*

pains [you] in the heart […] then you go with it. If it's enough to make you concerned, you act on it."

Humility, compassion, empathy, appreciation, collectivity, and respect are the principles that Latino fathers feared their children are in danger of losing. They struggled to balance their desires to give their children everything they did not have when they were kids and passing on these important values which they believe they learned *because* of their struggles. In their efforts to confront these challenges, fathers reminded their children about their family's history of intergenerational mobility; undocumented fathers drew on their documentation status to convey the privilege of citizenship to their U.S.-born children; first generation fathers drew on their life experiences in Mexico and El Salvador in order to show their kids that their childhood in the U.S is not universal; and fathers with a political consciousness rooted in social justice, aimed to pass on the value of helping others onto their children.

In her now classic study, *Unequal Childhoods,* sociologist Annette Lareau (2011) identifies two different child-rearing approaches among her Black and White middle-class and working-class respondents. Middle-class parents adopted a cultural logic of parenting that stressed the "concerted cultivation" of their children. Middle-class parents actively fostered and assessed their child's talents, opinions, and skills; they organized multiple activities for their kids; they reasoned and negotiated with their children, which allowed children to challenge their decisions and statements; they intervened on behalf of their children in institutional interactions–like schools–and they trained their children to do the same. As a result, middle-class children developed a sense of entitlement, acting as though they had "a right to pursue their own individual preferences and to actively manage interactions in institutional settings" to suit their preferences (6).

Working-class and poor parents, contrarily, engaged the "accomplishment of natural growth." Working-class and poor parents care for their children and allow them to grow; they do not organize the daily lives of their kids, granting them the freedom to go out and play with friends or their relatives who typically live close by; they used directives with their children and children rarely questioned or challenged their directives; they were dependent on institutions and often felt frustrated and powerless to intervene on behalf of their children. Consequently, working-class and poor children developed a sense of constraint and they were "less likely to try to customize interactions to suit their preferences" and accepted the actions of authority figures (6).

My interviews with Latino fathers suggests a *convergence* of these two cultural logics of childrearing. On one hand, fathers are promoting the "accomplishment of natural growth" because they want their children off their cell phones, iPads, and videogames and out doing things and exploring. They allowed their kids to explore their passions rather than directing them towards one specific path. They wanted their kids to be jubilant and carefree–"don't take away 'being a kid' from the kids." They used directives (and sometimes spanking) to communicate and discipline their children. They also experienced a sense of frustration, especially when their children openly challenged them and their authority.

But, in other ways, they practice "concerted cultivation" because they are trying to provide structure to help their children focus and not lose sight of the "bigger picture." Twenty-eight fathers had children involved in extracurricular activities at one point in time; mainly organized sports. Only five middle-class fathers mentioned having children involved in *multiple* extracurricular activities, which included more exclusive activities like violin and dance lessons. Fathers are also starting to use more reasoning when communicating with their children by

explaining to them why they are being disciplined or asked to do certain things which grants their children space to negotiate and challenge their authority. Unlike their experience, their children are being seen *and* heard. Discussions between parents and children are hallmark of concerted cultivation. They are encouraging their children's agency.

I conceptualize the convergence of these two cultural logics of childrearing as *the concerted cultivation of natural growth*. This convergence is due to two interrelated factors: social class and generation-since-immigration. All but one (59 of 60) of the fathers I interviewed grew up poor or working-class. They grew up in segregated, low-income neighborhoods, attended public schools, and their parents had a high school diploma or less. Their parents mostly supported their accomplishment of natural growth. Fathers recalled hanging out with their *primos* (cousins), having a lot of free time, playing outside, being physically disciplined when they misbehaved, never talking back at their parents, and that their parents did not intervene in their schooling because they did not know how to engage the institution (especially immigrant parents who did not speak English). Thirty-two of these fathers experienced upward mobility: they worked in white collar-jobs, held a college degree and were living in middle and low-middle-class neighborhoods. Although 27 fathers did not experience upward mobility to the same degree as middle-class fathers (e.g., working a white-collar job, having a college degree, etc.) they are still better off than their parents and their children are better off as well. Their experiences growing up poor or working-class and being raised to accomplish their natural growth shapes fathers' frame of reference regarding childrearing. They draw from these experiences to raise their children even though the material circumstances are different from their childhoods.

Overwhelmingly, second generation fathers were the *most* vocal about the struggle to negotiate the tensions between these two logics of childrearing, mirroring their dual concerns: the "pricelessness" and "idleness" in their children. Their accomplishment of natural growth was encouraged by their parents, but they also experienced a degree of concerted cultivation because as English speakers, they acted as translators between their immigrant parents and institutions. Witnessing the challenges their parents faced because they were poor or working-class immigrants who spoke little to no English, second generation fathers adopted an "immigrant narrative" (Vallejo 2012) and espoused the value of having "economic empathy" (Estrada 2019).[44] Most likely, their children will not develop this consciousness or behave in similar ways because fathers are U.S-born, speak English, and have different class trajectories. Their children will not have to live up to their end of the "immigrant bargain" (Smith 2005).[45] Their concerns that their third generation children will not understand "the struggle" compels them to engage strategic parenting behaviors. Fathers are caught in this transition–in-between–where they feel they need to continue to promote mobility and belonging but, at the same time, they are concerned that their children are spoiled, apathetic, and entitled. To mediate this contradiction, between longing and mourning idealized notions of childhood, fathers develop a childrearing approach that is in-between: the concerted cultivation of natural growth.

[44] Vallejo (2012) argues that second generation Mexican-Americans espouse this "immigrant narrative" due to their parents' migration experience, economic marginalization, and a shared struggle for mobility and belonging; justifying why they give back, socially and financially, to their parents and extended families. Similarly, Estrada (2019) argues that Latinx child street vendors develop "economic empathy" because they experience their parents' position of oppression and their family's economic marginalization. This behavior is shaped by their experiences working together with their parents to support the economic survival of their families and from the shared struggle that exposes second generation Latinx children to the labor struggles of their immigrant parents.
[45] Latina/o immigrant parents often underscore their own migration scarifies and hard work at low-paying jobs to encourage their children to get an education. The "immigrant bargain" (Smith 2005) is the idea that their sacrifices will be redeemed by their second-generation, U.S.-born children's success stories, which includes a professional educational degree.

Conclusion

Latino fathers *testimonios* about their childhood and the challenges they now face with their own children underlines the social construction of childhood. Several fathers' work experiences started before they were even adolescents and the responsibility to support the economic survival of their families challenges the modern ideal of childhood in which kids are not expected to work, unless it is for their own personal development.

Latino fathers also have a nuanced approach to the issue of discipline, specifically corporal punishment. Fathers who physically punished their kids validate their practice by claiming that their children were not spanked as *harshly* or to the same *degree* as they were when they were children. On the other hand, fathers draw on their personal experiences, education and training, and community engagement to find other alternatives. Fathers are also compelled by their wives and partners to discipline their children in different ways. Some, however, resort to using the volume or the tone of their voice to chastise their kids, particularly their sons. Surprisingly, many participants, on both sides, see their own histories of spanking as "necessary." The matter of how to discipline children and whether spanking is appropriate, unveils the larger tension between parents' rights and children's rights.

Moreover, fathers remember vividly feeling stigmatized when they were boys. These feelings of stigmatization translated into feeling unloved and unwanted. It was when they became fathers that participants felt the love they did not feel when they were younger and gained a sense of purpose. Lastly, fathers see a second chance of redoing their childhood with their children. Fathers shared a desire to give their children a better childhood which consisted of having more love, trust, openness, communication, and access to material resources. Though they also share a growing concern that they are spoiling their children.

Fathers who were under the age of 40 and had young children are concerned about the growing apathy they see in U.S. children and they negotiate these tensions by reminding their children about their family's history of intergenerational mobility; undocumented fathers draw on their documentation status to convey the privilege of citizenship to their U.S.-born children; first generation fathers draw on their life experiences in Mexico and El Salvador in order to show their kids that their childhood in the U.S is not universal; and fathers with a political consciousness rooted in social justice, aim to pass on the value of speaking for others when they cannot speak for themselves onto their children. These strategies are a part of a new childrearing approach, the concerted cultivation of natural growth, which fathers deploy to mediate the contradictions between longing for the "pricelessness" and the morning the "idleness" of their children. In the next chapter, I will focus on men's relationships with the men in their lives to show that fatherhood is not just about men's relationship with their children, but it also reflects men's relationships with other men.

IV. Between Reverence and Resentment: Latino Fathers' Relationships with Men in their Lives

Although Gael had a difficult relationship with his father growing up, "it still mattered to me that my father was proud of me." When he was younger, Gael and his older brother were athletes and they were some of the best players on their respective baseball and basketball teams, which made their father very proud. During our interview, Gael, a 70-year-old middle-class Puerto Rican father and grandfather, had an epiphany: "that's interesting, right. Because if I didn't like the way that he was as a father, why would it matter to me what he thought? But it still did." Like Gael, the majority of Latino fathers I interviewed yearned for their fathers' approval and their gendered sense of self was related to the quality of relationship they had with the men who raised them. What their fathers thought about participants mattered to them. Even Latino fathers who were raised by single mothers or their extended family members still harbored strong feelings about their absent fathers, shaping who they are as fathers and as men.

Fatherhood is one of the primary pathways for men to talk about gender and to see themselves as gendered beings. Fatherhood is a masculine performance. According to Marsiglio and Pleck (2005), fathering experiences shape and are influenced by gendered social structures and relations. Fatherhood is gendered in two dimensions: parental and lineal. Between fathers and mothers, fatherhood is part of the gendered division of parental labor, and between fathers and sons, fatherhood is the connection between ensuing generations of men (Allen 2016; Cabrera *et al.* 2000; Daly 1995; Roy 2014; Townsend 2002; Watson-Phillips 2016). When men become fathers, they are forced to reconsider and reevaluate their own fathers.

These reexaminations, however, are now taking place during an era where cultural definitions of fatherhood are changing. Some scholars regard these changing ideologies as the "new father" or "new fatherhood" (Doherty *et al.* 1998; Coltrane 1996; Dermott and Miller

2015; Edin and Nelson 2013; Levine and Pitt 1995; Marsiglio and Roy 2012; Miller 2011; Pinto and Coltrane 2009). In the "new fatherhood" model, men are combing breadwinning with availability, engagement, and nurturing. The changing discourses on fatherhood are connected to the dynamic and shifting patterns of contemporary men's gender displays and power (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner 1994). The "new masculinity" or "new man" is constituted by softer and more sensitive gender displays. The "new man" is emotionally intelligent and expressive and egalitarian in his relationships with women. Moreover, the "new man" is defined in contrast to the more aggressive, violent and misogynistic gender displays of the "traditional man."[46]

Overall, men's fathering is a social practice that affects men's identities as men. According to Cabrera *et al.* (2000), assessing the father-child relationship is pivotal in determining the development of fathers themselves. Family theorist Kevin Roy (2014) suggests that fatherhood infuses meaning into men's behaviors in families and communities. For example, poor, urban men are drawn to fatherhood because it is one way to gain access to a positive social role (Edin and Nelson 2013). In her examination of Chicano men and masculinity, Baca Zinn (1982a) argues that manhood may take on greater significance for men (like Chicanos and other men of color) who do not have access to socially valued roles and identities. Being a father is a socially valued role and it is one important way in which men can acquire status and dignity when they are systemically denied other roles and opportunities. Likewise, Watson-Phillips

[46] Some scholars have argued, though, that rather than challenging "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 2005) or the neotraditional model of fatherhood (Gerson 2010), these new shifts in gender and family ideologies are actually recreating inequality by projecting traditional fathering and masculine practices on marginalized and subordinated men. For example, Kim and Pyke's (2015) analysis on the Korean Father School movement illustrates how Euro-American hegemonic masculinity is associated with the "New Man" ideal of a nurturing and emotionally expressive family man. The movement idealizes Euro-American hegemonic masculinity as the remedy to the traditional Korean masculinity of the "distant patriarch."

(2016) regards "relational fathering" as a parenting approach that allows men to re-envision their sense of selves by redefining care work as masculine and manhood as relational.

In this chapter, I argue that Latino fathers' reconsiderations and reevaluations of their own fathers (and other father figures) expose a continuum between two extremes of reverence and resentment. On one hand, some participants recalled loving relationships and pleasant interactions with their father figures that involved mutual respect, admiration, and trust. Others remembered hating their fathers growing up and they characterized their relationships as turbulent, involving fear and violence. This continuum is neither flat, unidimensional or static. Nuanced expressions of idolization and hatred, fulfillment and longing, *respeto* (respect) and indifference, forgiveness and condemnation may exist between these two extremes and they change throughout the life course.

Furthermore, tensions brought by the new cultural expectations of the "new father" and "new man" further shapes the reverence-resentment continuum. College-educated respondents are more likely to hold their (mostly non-college educated) fathers accountable to the "new father" ideal than non-college educated respondents. I present Latino fathers' stories in three sections: (1) men who recalled hero-worshiping their fathers (and other father figures) and work to create their gender and father identity in their image; (2) men who feared and resented their fathers for their use of violence, lack of emotional expressiveness, and physical absence and work to accomplish a different gender and father identity; and (3) an examination of how this continuum impacts their relationships and level of closeness with other men, particularly those who are also fathers.

"My Dad Was the Best Person I Have Ever Known": Revering Fathers

Respondents praised their fathers for being financial providers, hard workers, for their perseverance in the face of adversity, and, most importantly, for being actively involved in their lives. Respondents felt supported and encouraged by their fathers when they participated in the day-to-day caregiving of them when they were younger. In other words, they revered their fathers for adhering to the “new father” ideal. As men, participants identified with their fathers. Respondents who appeared to closely align their gender identity with their fathers vocalized their idolization the loudest. They also aimed to replicate some of their fathers’ fathering practices with their own children.

Alan, a 48-year-old second generation middle-class father, started to cry when I asked him a question about his relationship with his father who passed away almost three years ago. Alan describes his father as a simple and loving man and, overall, “the best person I've ever known and I could only hope to be half the father he was.” His father was a Vietnam veteran who suffered from PTSD for most of Alan’s life. Alan also describes his father as a feminist and as a man who was ahead of his time. After his parents divorced, Alan took care of him “because he didn't want to deal with people too much. So, it put me in a place of responsibility at an early age.” Despite taking care of him as a child, Alan maintains, “my dad gave me the tools to do anything I wanted to do.” Whether it was taking Karate classes or painting, Alan’s dad supported him wholeheartedly and he hopes to be as supportive with his own two sons. For Alan, his father symbolized the standard of a “good father” and a good man.

Six months after his father passed away, Ricardo, a 31-year-old second generation middle-class father, was still mourning because he “idolized him a lot.” Although he knows that there are many people (like his nieces and nephews) who grow up without their fathers, Ricardo is still dumbfounded: “how do you live without a father? I haven’t had a father for like six

months and I cannot imagine a child growing up without a father." Ricardo's veneration for his father was so high that he was the reason why Ricardo had children at an early age. His dad was 60 when Ricardo was born and he "could not picture a world where my kids were not going to meet my dad [...] I wanted my kids to have memories of my dad." His daughter was born when his father was 83 years old and his son followed two years later. He considered every year his children interacted with his father as a "blessing."

Becoming a father makes men's fathers into grandfathers for their children, which creates links between generations and it binds men more closely to their families. Ricardo derived a great sense of pride from watching his dad bond with his children over his other grandchildren. One of his sisters even commented that their dad never picked up *her* kids from school and when Ricardo was looking through family photos for a slide show at his dad's funeral, he was happy to see that there were more photos of his dad with his children than with his other grandchildren.

Victor spoke about his father for a little over thirty minutes during our ninety minute interview. Victor, a 39-year-old third generation middle-class father, "always knew" he wanted to be a father:

> Because of my own father [...] He is my everything. He is my hero. He is my role model. He is undeniably the man who has shaped me in every aspect of what it means to be a man: professionally, personally, socially, athletically. I mean, literally, my father has made an impact on every single aspect of my existence.

Victor learned what is means to be a man from his own father. He loves his father unconditionally and he also prides himself as his dad's favorite because out of his two siblings, he is the only one who has given his father a grandson. The fact that fatherhood is a gendered relationship is evident in men's expressed preference for sons, their differential identification with sons and daughters, and the ways in which they treat their sons and daughters differently

(Leavell *et al.* 2012; Rafaelli and Ontai 2004; Townsend 2002; Watson-Phillips 2016). Although Victor's dad has never said that he prefers for his grandson over his granddaughters, Victor has witnessed differences in how his dad treats his three-year-old son compared to his nieces ("they have this incredibly profound special relationship"). Echoing Ricardo's familial experiences, the relationship between Victor's father and his son confers his father's approval over his intimate life. Both of their fathers' relationships with their children validates their fatherhoods and it grants them status among their siblings.

In regards to his professional life, Victor became an educator and developed a commitment to strengthening the Latina/o educational pipeline because his father is considered a pioneer in the field of Mexican American history and Chicano Studies and was a professor at an elite university. Victor strives to emulate his father in his professional life, but, as a father, he also aims to replicate his dad's fathering practices. For Victor, what is most incredible about his dad is "what he accomplished as a father because oftentimes people who are so successful or so dedicated to their jobs, they don't always take the time to be the dad that you want them to be." Despite his work commitments, Victor's dad was highly involved in his sons' lives, especially when he coached their sports teams. Interestingly, Victor was the respondent who showed the most veneration for his father (given the amount of time he spent talking about him) and he is also the only respondent who grew up in a middle-class environment and whose father had the most educational training (a Doctorate degree). In their study of adult sons and their fathers, Ide *et al.* (2018) found that sons of college-educated fathers reported higher relationship quality and more frequent communication than other respondents. Their findings suggest that class may influence children's relationships with their fathers.

Sports also played an important role in Andrés' relationship with his father. When Andrés, a 51-year-old middle-class Chicano, was a child, his father held three jobs, but:

> He always found time, I don't know how he did it, but he would go watch me play soccer. Sometimes I would score a goal and I would look around the sidelines and my mom is, like, screaming and stuff and my dad would be asleep, you know what I mean, it didn't bother me because I knew [….] my dad was there for me.

Andrés became teary-eyed when he spoke about how much his father's efforts to attend his games meant to him ("man, is there a way to not cry in this thing?"). Despite being tired from working multiple jobs, his father always found time for him. His father made him feel that he mattered and that a soccer game was too important to miss no matter how tired he was from work.

Fathers of boys are more frequently engaged in physical play than fathers of girls (Leavell *et al.* 2012; Lindsey, Mize, and Pettit 1997; Paquette 2004). Therefore, scholars have pointed to the significance of sports in the lives of boys and men in the United States (Connell 2005; Eitzen 1975; Fine 1987; Messner 1990, 1992; and Schaffer 1975). Sports is arguably the most important area of contact between fathers and sons. The majority of respondents who remembered their fathers as "involved fathers" and who claimed to be "involved" fathers themselves cited organized sports as the arena in which their involvement mostly took place. Some of the examples that respondents provided as evidence of paternal involvement were: taking their children to practices, never missing a game, and coaching their children's teams. Sports also serve as important markers of masculinity, as activities in which to socialize sons, and as experiences for fathers and sons to share (Townsend 2002). According to sociologist Michael Messner (1990), the emotional salience of sports in the development of masculine identity originates in boys' relationships with fathers. In fact, participants who did not have the

best relationship with their fathers were able to find some connection with them via sports (like Gael who I mentioned earlier). On the other hand, participants who were not athletic or interested in sports noted that their lack of athleticism made them feel disconnected from their fathers. I will return to these theme later.

Furthermore, Andrés' deep respect for his father also stems from his father's humility. When Andrés started playing tennis, which is mostly a white middle- and upper-middle class sport, his father continued to show up to his matches. Andrés, however, felt:

> Embarrassed because he would pull up and he was like the *jardinero*, you know, the gardener, and these kids, their fathers pulled up in beamers, corvettes, and suits and they were watching their kids play and I would be like embarrassed because my dad was there and you could see like grass stains on him and it was a bit embarrassing.

Although his father did not understand the sport, he still attended his matches to watch him play. The level of commitment that his father demonstrated motivated Andrés to " be that kind of father to my daughter." Andrés taught his only child–a daughter–how to play tennis and he trained her as a boxer, passing on his father's legacy who was also a professional boxer. He has been actively involved in her life, both personally and professionally. At the time of the interview, he and his daughter were collaborating on creating a performance piece called *How I Raised My Father.* Andrés' veneration for his father is nuanced, though, since he is critical of his father's alcoholism. Presently, Andrés does not drink and by working with the community and counseling other men, he realized that his father's alcoholism stemmed from unresolved childhood trauma and working multiple, back-breaking, jobs.

Andrés, Victor, Ricardo, and Alan were confident about their potential to be good fathers because of their relationships and experiences with their own fathers. They saw themselves adopting similar fathering practices and they closely identified with the men who raised them.

They saw their fathers as the standards for being "good men" and they were proud to pass on their legacy, whether it was by having sons or by socializing similar interests in their children.

Participants also revered their stepfathers because they "stepped in" when their biological fathers "stepped out." What these men admired the most was that their stepfathers did not differentiate between them and their biological children. When Lucas, a 50-year-old middle-class Mexican-American, was a teenager, his mother married his stepdad who used to be her high school boyfriend. When his sister went into labor at the same time he was scheduled to play an important football game, Lucas thought that no one in his family was going to attend, especially since it was also an away game. But when Lucas saw his stepfather walking in the stands he remembered thinking: "wow, like, he drove *all* this way […] seeing him walk up… that was huge for me." This was the first moment in the interview where Lucas cried. Lucas' father left when he was very young, which is why he refers to him as "the biological sperm donor." Growing up, most of Lucas' male role models were his teachers and coaches. It was not until his stepdad came into his life that Lucas felt a close connection with a father figure.

Marcial, a 30-year-old working-class Mexican father, "never grew up with [his] father" because he left when he was just three years old. When he was six years old, his stepfather came into his life. His stepfather was:

> Like a father to me. He taught me everything. He taught me how to work. He never separated me from his own kids. *He treated me like his own son.* All of that, I got it from him. I too want to give the same compassion that my stepdad gave to me to my children.

Marcial's stepfather treated him like if he were his biological son, which significantly affected his sense of self growing up and his father identity now. He strives to show the same level of compassion, love, and affection with his own daughters. One month after the interview took place, Marcial's wife became pregnant with their son which excited him. Marcial hoped to have

a son one day because, “I want to have that same opportunity to raise a boy. It's not like I can take my daughters to work– it's very, very different.” As a boy, his stepdad used to take Marcial to work with him and Marcial dreaded not being able to do the same as a father of only daughters. He sees the birth of a son as an opportunity to solidify his connection with his stepfather by doing some of the same activities like taking him to work.

Respondents revered their fathers and stepfathers because they were *responsible* men. Consistent with previous studies examining the meanings of fatherhood among fathers of Mexican descent (Behnke *et al.* 2007; Gutmann 1996; Mirandé 1997; Sánchez 2017), all respondents defined fatherhood as a “responsibility” and they recognized that not all men are prepared or willing to take this kind of responsibility. Father involvement is comprised of three dimensions: accessibility, engagement, and responsibility (Day and Lamb 2004; Lamb 2000).[47] Accessibility is based on fathers’ presence and availability to their child. Engagement refers to the quality of fathers’ interactions with their children, and responsibility describes fathers’ participation as day-to-day caregivers, which also includes financial provision. The intricate connection between manhood, responsibility, and fatherhood is explicitly conveyed via the phrase “it takes a man to be a father,” which many participants espoused. In his interviews with residents in a working-class neighborhood in Mexico City, Gutmann (1996) also found the association between being a dependable and engaged father with being a man. Additionally,

[47] Scholars have since expanded the concept of father involvement. Palkovitz (1997) extends the concept of paternal responsibility to differentiate the types of activities in which fathers and their children participate and between the quantity and quality of their care. From an ecological perspective, Doherty *et al.* (1998) argue that individual (i.e. fathers’ social capital), interpersonal (i.e. co-parental relationship), and structural factors (i.e. employment opportunities) affect the context in which resident and non-resident fathers can practice “responsible fathering.” Looking beyond structural and ecological factors, Cabrera *et al.* (2000:129) propose that “warmth, affect, sensitivity, and participation during specific engagements with children” are also important aspects of father involvement.

most of the fathers Gutmann interviewed defined their own masculinity (as well as others) in terms of their active role in parenting.

Adding to this rhetorical device–"it takes a man to be a father"–participants also differentiated between being a "sperm donor" and a father; the latter is a man who takes responsibility for his children. The inherent assumption in this perspective is that men can *choose* to be fathers. Men can choose to stay in their child's lives or walk away at any point in time. Even participants who did not report having close relationships with their fathers sympathetically reinterpreted their fathers' behaviors by appreciating them for not walking away from their responsibilities–assuming that they had a choice to do so–and this warranted their respect.

Respecting Fathers

Other participants revered their fathers as well, but they evoked the ethic of *respeto* (respect) rather than idolization that the fathers I mentioned earlier espoused. A hallmark of Mexican socialization practices is the act of instilling *el respeto* (respect) (Delgado-Gaitán 1992; De la Cruz 1999; Valdés 1996). *Respeto* signifies deference to the authority of elders, including parents and other adults in the family and in the community. Respondents spoke about the respect they had for their fathers whilst also calming that they did not have a close relationship with them. One of the reasons why they lacked a connection is because their fathers worked a lot and they were often away from home for long periods of time.

For example, Lauro's father was a seasonal migrant worker in the United States. His father *"fue una buena persona"* ("was a good person"), but he did not really know him until Lauro, a 42-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant father, and his twin brother migrated to the United States when they were sixteen years old. They lived with their father in the United

States for four years until their father returned to Mexico. Lauro respects his father because he was a hard-working, responsible, nonviolent, respectful man *"quien nos saco adelante"* ("who brought us forward") despite living in poverty. Due to Lauro's documentation status, he has not seen his father–or the rest of his family– for the last 18 years.

Similarly, Marcos' father worked in the United States since the family lived in Mexicali, Baja California. When Marcos, a 52-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant father, was young, he would often refer to his older brother as his father because he would not see his actual father for six or eight months out of the year. When comparing the relationship he has with his adult children to the one he had with his own father, Marcos shares, *"la diferencia es que yo conviví mucho tiempo con ellos y con mi papa, no había esa convivencia"* ("the difference is that I lived with them for a long time and with my father, there was no such coexistence"). Despite his experiences, Marcos always held a deep respect for his father because he was a man who fulfilled his responsibilities towards his family. Sadly, his father passed away two weeks before our interview took place.

Although Miguel, a 45-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant father, did not always agree with how his father behaved towards his family, he still respected him. His father was largely absent due to work and when he was free, Miguel mostly remembers him hanging out and drinking with his friends. Meanwhile, his mother was left with all of the work of raising five children. Miguel does not fully resent him nor does he wholly revere him as other fathers shared. He respects his father because children should always respect their parents. Despite this ambivalence, Miguel always longed for a close connection with his father. Unfortunately, Miguel did not have the opportunity to realize such desire. When Miguel's father died in 2010, Miguel was in the process of applying for his U.S. permanent residence. Miguel shares:

> *Me dolió mucho. Yo quería ir pero la misma consejera que me estaba ayudando me decía, "it's not right if you go. Si te vas–y vas a regresar porque aquí está tu familia–si te agarran de regreso, todo lo que hemos hecho ahorita, it's going to trash it. Si no puedes regresar, allá te vas a quedar y tu familia va a estar aquí."*
>
> It hurt me a lot. I wanted to go, but the same counselor who was helping me said, "It's not right if you go. If you leave – and you're going to come back because your family is here – if they catch you coming back, everything we've done right now, it's going to trash it. If you cannot return, you will have to stay there and your family will be here."

Due to his documentation status, Miguel had to choose between attending his father's funeral and staying with his family in the United States. Although it was a difficult decision, he stayed with his family and accepted the fact that nothing could be done. Like other respondents, Miguel respected his father even though he did not always approve of his father's fathering practices.

Rogelio, a 46-year-old second generation middle-class Latino, learned how to "be a man of our word" and how "to provide for yourself and others" from his father. Rogelio values these lessons and he respects his father despite having issues with how he and other male family members (e.g., grandfather, uncles) reinforced sexist behaviors, perpetuated alcoholism, and used insults (e.g*., "pendejo"* (stupid) and *"carbon,"* (dumbass)) to reprimand children. Rogelio does not necessarily resent his male family members because he attributes their behaviors to a lack of formal education and the social milieu of that particular time in history. The justification, "they were men of their times," was often used by respondents, like Rogelio, who wished to voice both their disapproval of their fathers' actions and their respect towards them and to also convey social change within their families from one generation to the other. This is another way in which participants sympathetically reinterpreted their father' behaviors and motivations.

There were many Latino fathers who revered their fathers. Their reverence stems from witnessing their fathers' struggles and sacrifices (especially in regards to work) for the well-

being of their families. They also revered their fathers for being present and making time for them. Above all, respondents admired their fathers because they were responsible men and they closely identified with them in this regard. While some worshipped their fathers, others were a bit more critical of them whilst also showing respect. Understanding their fathers as "men of their times" allows participants to look past their fathers' shortcomings and to appreciate the work they did to support them and their families. The majority who voiced criticisms of their fathers whilst also conveying their respect are Mexican immigrants, suggesting the strength of *el respeto* (respect) as a cultural value in Mexican socializing practices.

Did participants voice their critiques when they were younger and financially dependent on their fathers? Or did participants acquire these understandings as they got older and became financially independent and fathers themselves? Did they always revere their fathers? Or is their reverence a product of the present as they look back on their familial experiences? The answer to these questions are not entirely clear, but my conversations with respondents suggest the significance of time and the cultural milieu in shaping their memories and their assessments of their fathers and their family lives. If the growing awareness of mental health and addiction was not taking place in U.S. society, would Andrés, Miguel, and Rogelio's perspectives of their fathers' alcoholism change? Would Victor idolize his father to the same degree if his father did not fulfill the ideal of the "new father"? Temporality also shapes the other end of the continuum: resentment. Contrary to fathers who admired their fathers, there are others who feared and outwardly despised their fathers, compelling them to construct their father identities and gender identities in contrasting ways.

"I Hated My Father": Resenting Fathers

On the other end of the spectrum, fathers remembered fearing and hating their fathers when they were growing up. Their fathers' lack of emotional expressiveness, use of violence, and physical absence added to their resentment. This end of the continuum is highly shaped by the contemporary father ideology that consists of a near-exclusive emphasis on loving, friendly relations with children, meaningful connections, and quality time (Doucet 2006; Edin and Nelson 2013; Ide *et al.* 2018; Watson-Phillips 2016). They resented their fathers for not fulfilling the ideal of the "new father." Saul, a 33-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant, praised his father as a provider: "He always provided a place to live, eat, and clothes." However, Saul laments that his father "never showed us love. He didn't have love for us. So, the way we were brought up was with fear." Saul feared his father because of his use of violence. His father was verbally and physically abusive and he most abusive towards his mother. So when Saul's mother decided to leave his father, his father took him and siblings away to a different state because "my dad was mad. He wanted to hurt my mom by taking us away from her [and] we suffered a lot because of that."

Saul constructed a strikingly different approach to fatherhood. For instance, Saul maintains a cordial relationship with the mother of his son despite their separation. Rather than taking their son away, like his father did, they went to family court where they made child custody arrangements that satisfied both parties. Moreover, when his son is having trouble on his homework, Saul tries to help him the best way he can rather than hitting him for not understanding the material, which his father used to do to him. Although he does not condone what his father did, Saul maintains that he is not the one to judge his father. He maintains:

> We aren't ones to judge our parents. Parents do the things they have to do and we're just children. We have to respect and love for our parents either way. We are no one to judge our parents. What I feel,

> is that there is a God who will take care of this, but it is not my place to judge him.

Saul's testimony illustrates the nuances in the reverence-resentment continuum. Although his father was a violent man–who ruled with fear–Saul refrains from passing judgement on his father because of the authority his father maintains as the family patriarch. Like other fathers, he adheres to the social value of showing respect to elders. Moreover, he draws from his spirituality as reassurance that his father will be held accountable–not by him or his siblings–but by a supreme being in the next life.

Gerardo, a 49-year-old second generation middle-class Chicano, acquired a "love for my *cultura*" and a "love for education" from his father. Gerardo's father migrated to the United States as part of the Bracero program and the hardships and discrimination he experienced as a Mexican immigrant farmworker drove him to instill a strong value for education onto his children. Although his father was very encouraging and supportive of his daughters, he was not the same way with his sons. When I asked him why he thought his father was tougher on his sons than on his daughters, he said:

> It's the pain and anguish he had from his own father–his absent father. He had some deep pain with his father abandoning him as a young child [when] he was three years old. So I think it was that pain and rage [he had] towards [his] own gender that [got] projected on [his] sons.

Gerardo highly respects his father who he describes as a "phenomenal provider," but he also feared him. He grew up fearing that he could "never measure up" to his father or fulfill his gendered expectations. Gerardo admits he was "not the mold of my father" because he was raised "with a lot of emotional understanding" by his mother. He shares:

> So as a man, I think I have a value for my emotional experience and sharing my emotional feelings and being aware and empathetic to other people and my father… that was tough for him to accept and

> understand. [We had] really harsh interactions [where] oftentimes I thought, *I was not the son he wanted.*

Gerardo's relationship and perception of his father changed later in life when his father started sharing more if his life story, especially his struggles and failures. Gerardo shares that his father's openness to talk about these difficult experiences, "was really helpful because I saw this man, that was infallible, come from such a hard experience and he was incredible… how he was able to navigate through it."

Celestino, a 30-year-old third generation middle-class Latino, "hated" his father for "a very long time." Although he loved his father, he was also very angry at him: "I didn't even realize how angry I was until I moved out of the house." Celestino felt better once he moved out of his parents' house because "I didn't have to be like somebody else anymore. I could finally be myself and not have to worry about somebody judging me; somebody telling me that I wasn't good enough." During his adolescence and early adulthood, Celestino has a turbulent relationship with his father who thought he was too sensitive, too book smart, not athletic enough, and a pushover. In other words, he thought Celestino was not masculine enough.

Analyzing parents' response to their children's gender non-conformity, Kane (2006) found that parents were more accepting of their daughters' gender non-conformity than their sons'. Fathers, especially, were not accepting of their sons' excessive emotionality like crying and passivity, which are considered contemporary markers of femininity. Fathers play a central role in helping their sons accomplish masculinity and, in doing so, they reinforce their own as well. So, when their sons fail to accomplish hegemonic ideals of masculinity, fathers feel they have failed to achieve their own masculinity since they were unsuccessful in socializing masculinity onto their sons. The majority of respondents who felt detached from their fathers were men who

considered themselves emotionally expressive, intellectually–rather than athletically– inclined, and who were closer to their mothers and other female family members.

Furthermore, Celestino thinks his father resented him out of jealousy. As an infant, his father often ignored him and avoided spending time with him because he was sixteen when Celestino was born. His father was "still a child himself when I was born and all the attention was taken away from him […] he wasn't ready to be a dad at all." Consequently, Celestino had "to learn how to love myself" because his father never expressed any semblance of love towards him. Presently, he struggles with building close relationships with men and he believes this is due to his relationship with his father. Years later, Celestino realized:

> It was a pattern because my grandpa was like that to my dad, and my dad projected that onto me. And I wanted to end that cycle when I became a father. I just didn't want to perpetuate this hateful type of relationship with my kids.

Celestino constructed a father identity and adopted a set of practices–like emotional expressiveness– that are in sharp contrast with what he saw with his own father. Celestino's dad has since apologized to him for his past behaviors, but their relationship remains strained.

Overwhelmingly, respondents pointed to their father's lack of emotional intelligence as a source of their resentment. Their fathers were wither non-expressive or they mostly expressed anger which was aimed to dominate and control them and their family members. Montes (2013) observes how migration offered both Guatemalan migrant and non-migrant men an opportunity to reflect on their emotional relations with family members. By engaging in this reflexivity, Montes argues, men have the opportunity to behave in ways that challenge the negative traits associated with hegemonic masculinity, like being unemotional, nonnurturing, aggressive, and dispassionate. Likewise, Arditti *et al.* (2014) note that migration may afford migrant men to have close relationships with their children because they can break from rigid paternal structures that

focus on their role as disciplinarians. Although migration has the potential to impact men's emotions and the construction of their masculinities in important ways, the fact that this source of resentment was found across multiple generations, not just the migrant generation, suggests the convergence of multiple factors. These factors include: the changing "culture of fatherhood" (La Rossa 1997), the growing influence of the "therapeutic discourse" in postindustrial societies like the United States (Illouz 2008), and the contemporary shifts in masculinity politics (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Demetriou 2001; Messner 1993).

Growing Up Without Their Biological Fathers

Fifteen fathers grew up without knowing or having a relationship with their biological fathers. Out of these fifteen fathers, six grew up with stepfathers. Although they developed close relationships with other father figures (e.g., stepdads, coaches, uncles, grandfathers, etc.), they were still resentful of the men who "walked away from their responsibilities." Rafael, a 35-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant, was nine years old when he learned his father's identity. Although his father had a good-paying job, he never once paid child support for Rafael and his siblings. He still remembers the pain he felt because of his father's contempt:

> *Un diciembre, me acuerdo que le pedí unos tráiles bonitos grandes con carros y todo y la primera respuesta que me dio fue, "eso no es para ustedes, es para mis otros hijos." Ese fue un dolor grande para mí. Le tomé coraje [y] envidia.*
>
> One December, I remember that I asked him for these beautiful toy trailers with cars and everything and the first answer he gave me was, "that's not for you, that's for my other children." That was painful for me. I resented and envied him.

This moment deeply shaped Rafael's approach to fatherhood. Rafael is very giving with his only son; whatever his son asks, Rafael will do his best to comply. Whether his son wants him to bring couple of pizzas to his school to share with his friends or a new video game console,

Rafael will acquiesce because he does not want his son to feel the same way he felt when his father denied him.

After his father passed away, Rafael participated in a play in which he played a pachuco since his father liked to dress up like a pachuco.[48] Rafael recognizes, *"hice esa obra para él. Tal vez haciendo esta obra para él fue como un perdón"* ("I did that play for him. Maybe doing this play for him was like a form of forgiveness"). Despite his resentment, Rafael forgave his father because carrying such emotional baggage is burdensome. It is important to note that the majority of respondents fathers' had passed away at the time of the interview, adding a significant dimension to the reverence-resentment continuum. Would participants' assessments of their fathers change–especially men, like Rafael, who forgave their fathers for their shortcomings–if their fathers were still alive?

It was very important for Bruno to "leave that legacy" because he grew up without a father. Bruno, a 50-year-old second and fourth generation middle-class Hispanic, characterizes his father as a *"mujeriego"* ("womanizer") who left his mother to raise their children by herself and who had many other children with multiple women. When he was a child, Bruno was hopeful that his father would return one day:

> You are always hoping that one day, you're gonna open the door and there he is, and life is gonna be back to normal… how it should be… like in the movies or T.V. shows.

Occasionally, Bruno's father would stop by to see him and his siblings, but those visits were short and inconsistent. About fifteen years ago, Bruno's sons had to complete a family history assignment for school and his wife suggested he should "go and find your dad and introduce him to the grandkids." Bruno reconnected with his father and he introduced him to his family. The

[48] Coined in the 1940s, "pachuco" refers to Mexican American men and women who dressed in zoot suits or zoot suit-influenced attire.

reunion, however, felt bittersweet. Bruno did not feel a "sense of pride" when his sons met his father. He hoped, however, that this taught his sons a valuable lesson "of what not to do." More than anything, Bruno hoped that his sons:

> Learned the importance of being a parent, of being a father and a dad, you know, and the responsibility of being a father and a dad. So that when they get to that point where they make that decision… that they're making *good* decisions and that they find the right partner so that they don't have to do this three or four times because I don't think it's fair to the kids.

Since then, Bruno remains in contact with his father–who has been having health problems in recent years–but their relationship is not very intimate. When I asked Bruno if he had forgiven his father for his absence, Bruno echoes Saul's stance: "Who am I to judge? […] it is what it is, and he's paying his penance now. He'll have to answer to somebody else. He doesn't need to answer to me anymore."

As stated earlier, Lucas admires and respects his stepfather, but he does not share the same sentiments about his biological father. Lucas felt "very bitter" about not growing up without his biological father. Nonetheless, his situation taught him a lesson that is fundamental to his philosophy of fatherhood: the most important thing for a father to do is to be present in the lives of his child(ren). Lucas always promised himself that he would never be like his father: "I will never be absent." The first time Lucas met his father was when he was in 10 years old. When Lucas saw him at the door of their house, he asked him, "what are you doing here?" to which his father responded, "is that the way you greet your father?" Later during this visit, his father and his mother got into an argument and Lucas saw his father pull his mother around by her hair. At that moment, Lucas got "in between them and trying to push him away […] and I remember [my mom] grabbing a metal broomstick and she hit him two or three times on the back." Lucas saw his father again when he was a senior in high school. Wanting to build a

relationship with father, Lucas would visit him during the weekends, but he soon realized it was futile. Lucas was still mad at him that "used to order a lot of food on purpose just so that he can pay for it."

Decades later, he found his father on Facebook and he looked ill which saddened Lucas. When he passed away, Lucas did not mourn. He remembers feeling "nothing. Like Tupac said, 'when my dad passed away, my feelings wouldn't let me feel for a stranger.'" The reason why Lucas was not grieving his father's passing is because he has not forgiven his father. Lucas claims:

> I'm not bitter. I have this thing where I can't let go of stuff. I hold grudges. My daughter always tells me, 'you don't have to forget, but you need to forgive just to get that out of you.'

Although Lucas is not as bitter about his experiences as he used to be, but he is still "not over it."

Part of the resentment men feel towards their fathers is due to their absence–both physical and emotional absence. Blas' brothers "hold a lot of resentment towards the way my dad raised us." Unlike his siblings, Blas, a 37-year-old second generation middle-class Mexican-American, has tried to understand why his dad was not emotionally engaged with his children and he has concluded, "you can't do something you were never taught to do." Blas also explains his father's lack of emotional expressiveness as intergenerational: "[My dad] wasn't provided that from his father. [He] didn't really have strong father figure in their life. So it's difficult for [him] to not reciprocate."

All of the respondents acknowledged that their fathers' behaviors were intergenerational–they were not raised to be loving by their fathers. In doing so, they amplify the significance of being socialized by fathers. It is not enough to be raised by a loving mother, what matters is

being raised by a loving father. They also assume the passivity of their fathers and overemphasize their own agency. In other words, who their fathers were and how they behaved is a consequence of how they were raised and of the time in which they were raised, but respondents have agency and a choice in "breaking that cycle." Their agency, many claim, stems from having formal education.

Respondents who grew up without involved and loving fathers, grew up with a sense of longing. They longed to have loving, caring, and intimate relationships with their fathers. They longed to feel they mattered. Modernity engenders nostalgia. Nostalgia, in the sense of a "longing for what is lacking in a changed present . . . a yearning for what is now unattainable, simply because of the irreversibility of time" is a central notion that permeates present-day discourses and practices (Pickering and Keightley 2006:920). In contemporary U.S. society, changing ideologies of fatherhood and masculinity are compelling men to revisit their childhoods and adolescence and to reassess their fathers. This form of social change creates nostalgia that has the power to shape present perspectives. Although respondents' approach to fatherhood is different now, it is difficult not to feel like they missed out on having different paternal relationships and familial experiences. This longing also shapes their relationships with other men in general.

Longing to be Close with Other Men

When Cristian, a 71-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant, learned that he was going to be a grandfather he was excited and eager to share the news with anyone who was willing to listen. After he told a few male co-workers the news about his family, Cristian felt a bit ridiculous (*"me sentí ridiculo"*) because no one really paid him any attention (*"nadie me hacía caso"*). Cristian realized: *"¿Qué chingados andaba yo haciendo dándole saber a la demás*

gente a quien no le importa nada mis sentimientos?" ("What the hell was I doing letting other people know who don't care about my feelings?"). Although he was very happy about becoming a grandfather, Cristian felt discouraged to share the news with the people he spent the most time with– his male co-workers on the construction crew.

Like Cristian, several respondents wished they could talk to other men about their intimate lives without feeling judged or expected to perform a particular masculinity. Men want closer and meaningful relationships with other men. Respondents who reported having close relationships with other men were mostly middle-class, college-educated fathers. These men are grateful to have male friends (many of whom are also fathers) who they can trust and seek their mentorship. Many more men, particularly older working-class men, feared that talking to other men about fatherhood (e.g., giving fathers advice, sharing good news about their children, etc.) would make other men feel bad about themselves and their fathering.

For example, when Marcos' daughter graduated from law school, he felt "like a peacock" (*"me sentí como pavorreal"*), meaning, he felt grand, happy, dignified, and very proud. He is thoughtful, however, about when to share information about his children. When fathers tell Marcos, a 52-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant, about their struggles with their children (e.g., drugs, prison, dropping out of school, expressing no desire to go to college) he chooses not to talk about his successful, college-educated children. He conveys:

> *Yo no le digo nada de mis hijos para no hacerlo sentir mal. Pero cuando el otro papá tiene hijos como, "mi hijo se graduó de ingeniería," y todo eso, entonces yo comparto. Pero si no es así, no lo hago para no hacer sentir mal a otra persona de que mis hija es una licenciada y que sus hijos no le hayan salido…. no sé si buenos hijos no sé.*
>
> I don't say anything about my children so that I don't make him feel bad. But when the other dad has children like, "my son graduated from engineering," and all that, then I share. But if it's not, I do not

> do it so as not to make someone else feel bad that my daughter is a graduate and that his children did not turn out to be… I don't know, good children, I don't know.

When other fathers share their stories about their equally successful children, Marcos volunteers information about his children. Marcos also admits that if his children had not turned out well (e.g., had no professional degree or had a criminal record), he would not be eager to share anything. He would hesitate to talk about children under these circumstances *"porque me sentiría como un fracaso ¿En qué falle? Sí, trabajé todo el tiempo"* ("because I would feel like a failure. In what did I fail? I worked all the time").

For many men (and women), children provide a way to prove one's worth. According to Gutmann (1996:70), "how children turn out is taken by many as a test of their parents' most significant accomplishments in life." This explains why Marcos would feel like a failure if his children were not college-educated professionals. This also explains why he is concerned about the appropriateness of discussing his children's accomplishments. In examining the high rates of childbearing among urban fathers, Edin and Nelson (2013:188) propose that fathering a child is evidence that one can accomplish something of value because it "offers the opportunity to see one's potential expressed in another, less damaged individual." The way in which poor and working-class men viewed their children as living "proof" of their worthiness is a masculinities issue. Marginalized by "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 2005), poor and working-class immigrant men of color look towards their U.S.-born children to reedmen them.[49]

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[49] First proposed in Kessler *et al.* (1982) and later expanded by Connell (2005), hegemonic masculinity refers to the current, most honored way of being a man. It requires all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimates the global subordination of women to men via patterns of social practices (e.g., things done not just a set of role expectations or identities). It is normative, but only a minority of men enact it. The ascendancy of hegemonic masculinity is supported by culture, institutions, and persuasion. Since gender relations are historical, gender hierarchies are subject to change. Therefore, what constitutes the most honorable way of being a man changes over time. This element of theoretical optimism leaves room for the possibility that "a more humane, less oppressive, means of being a man

When I asked Gerardo his perspective on what do men need to be the best fathers that they can be for their children, he pointed to the importance of mentorship. He also acknowledged why it matters to him to hear other men talk about their vulnerabilities and struggles. He shares:

> I think we need to hear other examples from other men about how hard it is. I think we need to hear examples from other men of when we have failed […] Because when I hear someone sharing the real pain of what it means to be a father, it invites me and it encourages me to connect and be vulnerable back so that is something that men need is to hear other examples from other men.

For Gerardo, what men need is to see other men not pose as the all-knowing, never makes a mistake, perfect father. Rather, men should be open about the moments when they failed to accomplished the ideal of the good father. While fathers like Marcos (who I mentioned earlier) would feel like failures if their children had not fulfill their end of the "immigrant bargain" (Smith 2006) and, therefore, silenced, Gerardo wishes that they would not fret about sharing their vulnerabilities and difficulties. It is important to point out, though, that Gerardo would not volunteer any information unless he was in the company of other men who volunteered the information first ("invited me and it encourages me to connect"). Like Marcos, he is still careful about when to let other men in.

Among Hawaiian cockfighters, Young (2017) observes how men undercompensate their masculinity by incorporating certain feminine practices (e.g., emotional displays) to create a tempered, locally contingent masculine performance. Young argues that masculine undercompensation only "works" in contexts where masculinity is not threatened or precarious. On the other hand, masculine *over*compensation only tends to surface in situations where men's masculinity is threatened. In order for men like Gerardo and Marcos to volunteer intimate,

might become hegemonic, as part of a process leading toward an abolition of gender hierarchies" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:833).

details about their lives, exposing their vulnerabilities, they need to be in spaces that allow masculine undercompensation. Only a minority of participants, like Andrés, were able to identify such spaces.

Andrés has had "several powerful men in my life" who "have been there for me; who have mentored me like a father figure, especially in education, something that my father couldn't do?". Andrés' father did not go to college, so he was unable to help him navigate higher education. Now as a community advocate, he is paying it forward by mentoring other men. He leads a monthly men's talking circle at a local community center and the subject of fatherhood "always comes up." During their most recent meeting, Andrés shares how powerful it was to hear one of the fathers talk about his son's suicide attempt and how helpless the father felt knowing he could not make his son's pain go away. Echoing Gerardo's earlier point, Andrés argues that when men share their stories of pain and struggle, it "triggers other men to talk about something that is happening them." When this happens, men can start healing. Andrés believes that men:

> Need to heal. They have to acknowledge what it is that they are trying to heal from. Having the talking circle has been the greatest thing in my life because I am held accountable with men and hearing other men's stories helps me reflect and [it] helps me heal. It helps me think about things differently […] Men need to acknowledge some of the generational trauma that has been passed on to them weather it was an alcoholic father or an abusive father; to acknowledge the patterns that they need to break.

Interestingly, the "generational trauma" that Andrés point to–which men need to heal from–stems from men's relationships and interactions with their fathers: with men. He also points to the significance of these relationships on men's identities and acknowledges men's agency is changing gender relations. Unlike the men in Schwalbe's (1996) study on the mythopoetic men's movement, Andrés does not view men as equally oppressed as women or in need of

empowerment as men. Rather, he problematizes masculinity and the costs that men pay to be on top of the gender hierarchy.

There was a point in Nicolás' life where he thought, "what does it really mean to be a man?". Rather than relying on his father for guidance, Nicolás, a 44-year-old middle-class Salvadoran, sought other male role models who could provide a broader understanding of manhood beyond breadwinning, which is the example his father provided. Nicolas has a strong support system of friends who are also fathers who often talk to each other about their fatherhood experiences. The "most valuable piece of advice" that one of Nicolas' friends gave him was to:

> Be okay with your baby crying, which I think was pretty powerful, because there is a lot of anxiety that comes whenever you hear your baby crying. As long you are going through the basics, your baby is going to be okay. It's usually more about *our* anxiety.

Rather than competing against each other to see who is the best father, Nicolas and his friends are open to discussing the challenges they face, like what to do when their infant is crying. When men are honest about their struggles, the opportunity to have authentically intimate relationships becomes available, thus challenging the gendered assumption that men do not or cannot ask for help when they need because it is a sign of weakness.

Growing up, Darío, a 33-year-old fourth generation middle-class Chicano, was never explicitly told "this is what a man is supposed to be" by his parents, but he learned these gender expectations in schools, though media, and social interactions. He believes that men "need to change masculinity." Darío maintains that men "been taught that we have to be selfish […] machismo teaches us that we, as men, have the right to do x, y, z. Or that we need to do x, y, z or else we're not being men." He recognizes, however, the difficulty in "giving up that sense of entitlement." Consequently, Darío proclaims that men "need feminism" to be the best fathers that

they can be for their children, to be better partners, and to be better men. Similar to the college-educated Latino men in Hurtado and Sinha (2016) study, Darío's support of feminism stems from his participation in activist spaces where women openly challenged activist men (their biases and privileges). I will return to this subject in the next chapter.

Respondents desire more intimate relationships with men. So, what is preventing them from doing so? Erving Goffman (1959, 1967) theorizes that men and women actively engage in impression management in ways that satisfy their needs and goals, but they are still held responsible to routine ritual performances which are part of the collaborative production of selves. Based on my interviews, fathers engage in a form of impression management when they are in the presence of other men that is in line with dominant gender expectations in order to feel safe. When men engage in impression management that is counter to accepted masculine performances, they are socially reprimanded. Cristian, who I introduced at the beginning of this section, felt ludicrous and was largely ignored by his male peers when he shared his excitement about becoming a grandfather. Men like Marcos and Gerardo are careful in their impression management because of they do not want to make other men feel bad about not having "good children" or because they have learned that they cannot trust just any man with their stories of hardship and failure. More college-educated fathers said they had close relationships with other men more than non-college educated fathers. These other men, however, are also fathers; no one indicated that they had close friendships with men who did not have children. Even though college-educated fathers had men in their lives who they could trust, it was a small number and they still hesitated and treated lightly around other men.

A key element in the development of masculine identity is an ambivalence towards intimacy (Messner 1990). Men fear being vulnerable in front of other men. One of the "costs of

being on top" (Kann 1986) for men is that their masculinity is always up for grabs. Kimmel (1997) points to the significance of the male gaze in structuring masculinity: "We are under the constant careful scrutiny of other men. Other men watch us, rank us, grant our acceptance into the realm of manhood. Manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval." Failing to receive their approval is a source of shame, which is an important instrument to sustain power over other men.

Conclusion

My conversations with Latino fathers about their fathers and their relationships with men expose a continuum between two extremes of reverence and resentment. Respondents recalled loving relationships and supportive interactions with their fathers. Some adhered to the ethic of *respeto* while also holding their fathers accountable for some of the behaviors that respondents did not condone. Conversely, other respondents remembered hating their fathers growing up; they had troubled relationships because they feared their fathers' use of violence. This continuum is not one-dimensional or fixed. Fathers' expressions were nuanced–some placed their fathers on a pedestal while also expressing anxiety about not living up to their example; others felt disconnected from their fathers but they still respected them since a child should always respect their parents; and while there were many who expressed feeling contempt and resentment towards their fathers at one point in time, they forgave them for their own sake. Contemporary cultural expectations of fathers and men frame how respondents remember their relationships with their fathers.

College-educated fathers are more likely to hold their fathers accountable to the "new father" ideal than non-college educated fathers. The "new father" and the new man is an "ideological class icon" (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner 1994); it reflects a white, college-educated professional involved and nurturant father. College-educated respondents see

themselves in the “new father” ideal, despite the fact that they are Latino and their reflections on their fathers are shaped by this ideology. They may forgive their fathers not always “being there” because of work, but they are less understanding of their fathers’ gender displays.

Respondents’ stories about their fathers also reveal a larger issue about men’s intimate relationships with other men. Respondents share their desires to be close to other men, but they also fear other men. Fear and shame prevent men from being vulnerable in front of other men and these are the prices men pay in order to maintain domination over women and other men. This is also one of the reasons why many respondents felt closer to their mothers (or other female extended family members) than their male relatives. Where men fall on the reverence-resentment continuum is not just based on the quality of their relationships with their fathers. Respondents also judged their fathers based on how they treated their mothers. Oftentimes, respondents learned how to be more of the father they wished to be for their own children and loving partner from their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and sisters. In the following chapter, I discuss the role that women play in shaping men’s masculinities and approaches to fatherhood.

V. "You Have to Fight to Hold Up Your End of the Bargain": The Socialization of Motherhood as Natural and Fatherhood as Work

Samuel is a soft-spoken man who chooses his words carefully. I met Samuel, a 49-year-old middle-class Mexican immigrant father of three adult daughters, at a symposium for Latina/o families that was organized by a school district in southern California. While I was standing by my table, recruiting potential participants, Samuel approached me and once he learned that I was looking for Latino fathers to interview for my dissertation research, he agreed to help. One week later, I sat across from him at a local bookstore near the school district where he works to conduct our interview. Ten minutes into the interview, I asked him, "do you think it's important for men to be fathers?" He nods his head, contemplating his response, then, Samuel replies:

> It's critical for men to be fathers, not to *engendrar* [beget], but to engage in the verb of the word "father" […] You have to live it. You have to do it. You have to enjoy it and suffer it. *It's an action.* It's not a noun nor is it an adjective. It is very much an action.

Throughout my conversations with Latino fathers, many of them, like Samuel, use words or phrases that allude to action to define what fatherhood means to them. In the previous chapter, we saw that respondents' approaches to fatherhood were informed by their sentiments regarding their own fathers. By differentiating "dads" (the "new fathers" who are engaged in caregiving and nurturing) from "fathers" (the archetype of the financial provider) and "sperm donors" (absent fathers), respondents are shifting their focus away from gender essentialism to highlight men's social agency in enacting fatherhood. This conceptual shift, however, is also made in reference to motherhood, which the majority of respondents still believe is *naturally* different from fatherhood. To understand fatherhood, then, we must engage the social construction of motherhood and the social forces that shape it.

Women's movements and the shifting economic structures in the United States and Latin America, intergenerational migration, and family relations have significantly impacted the gender dynamics in Latina/o families (Dreby 2010; Frank 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Guttman 2007; Hirsch 2003; Hardy-Fanta 1993; Hurtado 2003; Pardo 1999; Smith 2006; Segura 1994; Vasquez 2014). Women's increasing levels of employment and educational attainment, rising divorce rates, the gutting of the social safety net, and the cultural changes in gender attitudes overall have compelled men to reconsider who they are and their contributions to their families (Arendell 1995; Coltrane 2019; Doucet 2018; Edin and Nelson 2013; Guttman 1997; Risman 1998). Respondents shared that they learned how to "father" from their mothers and they spoke about how the mothers of their children openly challenged their gender biases in their parenting, especially in regards to their sons. But more importantly, throughout our conversations, respondents constantly framed fatherhood as something they needed to "accomplish," "prove," and "defend" which, they claimed, differed for the mothers of their children. The conceptualization of fatherhood as a "verb"–as Samuel declares–is informed by contemporary hegemonic ideologies on motherhood which frame motherhood as natural to women.

In this chapter, I argue that the naturalization of motherhood drives the "un-naturalness" of fatherhood which leads men to frame fatherhood as work. First, I discuss how the sacralization of mothers and respondents' observations of their mothers' experiences of gender oppression influence their understandings of themselves as men, spouses, and fathers. Paradoxically, though, this process can reinforce the naturalization of motherhood that further marginalizes fathers and mothers, sustaining inequality in family life. Second, I unpack how the socialization of motherhood as natural and fatherhood as work occurs by examining

contemporary hegemonic ideologies on motherhood. Third, I examine how this processes operate during men's experiences of childbirth and child custody hearings. An analysis of their accounts hints at how "involved fatherhood" can be conceived as "achieved parenting" and motherhood as "denied achievement" because of gender essentialist approaches to motherhood. Overall, the meanings that fathers attach to fatherhood are shaped by their beliefs of whether they can be as competent in caregiving as mothers are perceived to be.

"Mi Madre fue todo para Mi" ("My Mother was my Everything"): The Sacralization of Latina Mothers

In the previous chapter, I discussed why respondents' attitudes and perceptions about their fathers range between a sense of reverence and resentment. When they speak about their mothers, however, respondents mostly use language that evokes their sacredness. The sacralization of mothers was most powerfully conveyed by the fifteen respondents who were raised by single mothers. The majority of respondents may feel ambivalent about their fathers, but their love and admiration for their mothers is unquestionable.

Felipe, a 39-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant father, was absolutely devastated when his mother died. The year after she died was tumultuous for Felipe: he started to drink heavily; he quit his job; he questioned his faith in God; he slept more; and he isolated himself away from everyone. These behaviors caused problems in his marriage which, ultimately, led to his divorce. Felipe was in pain because his mother was *"todo para mi. Lo mejor que he tenido en mi vida; lo mas sagrado […] y lo que soy es por ella"* ("everything to me. The best thing I've had in my life; the most sacred […] and who I am is because of her"). Reflecting on his mother's life, Felipe realizes:

> *Mi mamá fue una de las personas que ha sufrido muchísimo. Fue una persona que tuvo seis hijos y nos sacó adelante sin la necesidad*

> *de un hombre, de tener a alguien al lado […] Yo me di cuenta que por eso mucha gente le faltó el respeto.*
>
> My mom was one of those people who has suffered a lot. She was a person who had six children and took us forward without the need of a man, of having someone by her side […] I realized that was the reason why many people disrespected her.

His mother did not allow public opinion stop her from doing what she needed to do to feed her children despite being shunned by most of their community. A mother's suffering and her perseverance is highly revered. His reflection on his mother's circumstances shapes Felipe's views of women and mothers. He shares:

> *Yo creo que ser madre… yo creo que tienen un don ustedes las mujeres. Algo que realmente no se compara con nada. Yo lo digo porque tuve una mamá y se ha comprobado que una madre siempre lo va dar todo para sus hijos.*
>
> I believe that being a mother ... I believe that you women have a gift. Something that really doesn't compare to anything. I say this because I had a mother and it has been proven that a mother will always give everything for her children.

Felipe attributes a mother's determination and her willingness to sacrifice herself for her children to women's supposedly innate qualities ("women have a gift"). Although he describes himself as a loving, involved father, at the same time, Felipe admits that a father's love does not compare to a mother's love, which is "instinctive." When Felipe claims "*una madre siempre lo va dar todo para sus hijos"* ("a mother will *always* give everything for her children"), he is also insinuating that fathers will not always sacrifice themselves for their children. Felipe's father left his family before he was born, so his only benchmark for parenting is his mother.

Likewise, Rafael, a 35-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant father, adores his mother who raised him and his two siblings by herself. Throughout the interview, Rafael insisted that his mother was his father (*"mi madre es mi padre"*) and that he learned the meaning of

being a loving and supportive parent from her. He also credits his mother for making him into the man he is today. He shares:

> *Lo que he tenido siempre es gracias a mi madre […] Ella cruzó la frontera para darnos un mejor futuro. Ella tenia dos trabajos y nos mandaba dinero […]Ella nunca se ha dado por derrotada. Como ella dice, 'los hombres, hijo, no sirven para nada.'*
>
> What I have always had is thanks to my mother […] She crossed the border to give us a better future. She had two jobs and she would send us money […] She has never allowed herself to be defeated. She says, 'Son, men are useless.'

According to Vasquez (2010), mothers are the instructors of both ethnic traditions and gender ideologies. Like the Chicana mothers in Vasquez's study, Rafael's mother used her personal experiences to instruct her children on gender issues, shaping his overall view of women and men. Like Felipe, Rafael's father was largely absent from his life so his understanding of his fatherhood are based on his mother's parenting.

Due to his mother's perseverance and strength, Rafael has always *"admirado a las mujeres, porque siempre han salido adelante […]ellas no sé dan a derrotar"* ("admired women, because they have always moved forward […] they don't know let themselves be defeated"). Unlike Felipe who insinuates men's lack of capacity to "mother" in the same way as women, Rafael is clear about his stance on men. Comparing men's persistence when faced with challenges, Rafael proclaims, *"los hombres no llegan al nivel donde están las mujeres"* ("men do not reach the level where women are").[50] While Felipe and Rafael recount heroic stories about their mothers to illustrate how proud they are to be the men these women raised by themselves,

[50] Ten months after our interview, I met Rafael's mother at a family function. She is a woman with an outgoing personality who immediately made me feel welcomed. She also likes to dance. She shared with me that she was having health problems; her right leg would not stop shaking. Her daughter-in-law later told me that she suspects it could be early signs of Parkinson's Disease.

others, like Angel, shared with me stories of when they were bad sons to their self-sacrificing and humble mothers to illustrate how a mother's love knows no bounds.

Angel, a 39-year-old working-class Mexican immigrant, admires his mother wholeheartedly. When his mother became pregnant with him, his biological father wanted her to have an abortion or else he would end their relationship. After he took her to the clinic and paid for the procedure, she escaped wearing only a hospital robe and leaving all of her belongings behind. He ran after her shouting that he had already paid for the procedure and that she now had to do it. Consequently, she left her home in Mexico City and had Angel in small town in the neighboring state of Hidalgo. Knowing his mother's story added to the shame he felt years later as an adolescent when an incident occurred at his high school.

Angel received an academic scholarship to attend a prestigious and affluent high school in the city. The majority of his classmates were middle and upper-middle class who had cars and wore expensive clothes and jewelry. When he was in 9th grade, Angel was recognized for his performance on the end-of-the-year exam at the school's annual awards ceremony. While waiting for the ceremony to begin, he saw his friends' mothers arrive wearing lavish, beautiful, dresses. When *his* mother arrived, however, *"venía con un vestido mojado–porque había llovido–pero sencillo y no muy bien peinada"* ("she came wearing a dress that was wet–because it had rained–but simple and her hair was not very well combed"). After the ceremony ended, Angel did not wait for her: "*me salí. Agarré el camión y me vine para mi pueblo"* ("I left. I got on the bus and came back home"). Angel did not wait for his mother because *"me avergoncé de mi mama […]no me gusto verla llegar humilde, llena de lodo en una ciudad con gente tan importante"* ("I was ashamed of my mother […] I did not like seeing her arrive humbly, with mud [on her clothes and shoes] in a city with such important people").

When his mother arrived home, she asked him why he had left the school without her. Angel lied and told her that he had a lot of homework to do. She told him that she was very proud of him and that many of his teachers were congratulating her afterwards. Angel felt worse:

> *Dije, soy buen hijo–supuestamente–soy buen hermano, soy bien humilde y nunca me he avergonzado de donde vengo y en el momento que debía haber sido mejor, me avergoncé de mi mama de como iba y la abandone cuando ella nunca nos ha abandono. Cuando ella se estaba endrogando por pagar esa escuela. Cuando ella hizo hasta lo imposible para que yo estuviera allí.*
>
> I said, I am a good son–supposedly–I am a good brother, I am very humble and I have never been ashamed of where I came from and the moment when I should have been better, I was ashamed of my mother for how she looked and I abandoned her when she has never abandoned us. When she was getting in debt in order to pay for that school. When she went above and beyond for me to be there.

Angel felt so guilty that he eventually told his mother the truth later that night. His mother cried hearing her son's reasons and she told him, *"perdóname por no ser la madre que quieres"* ("forgive me for not being the mother you want"). While Angel recounted this story to me, he could not stop crying.

Fifty respondents were raised by Mexican and Chicana mothers and although their current religious or spiritual beliefs are diverse and the degrees of their religiosity or spirituality vary, 48 of them were raised Catholic. I emphasize this demographic characteristic to suggest how the sacralization of mothers (specifically mothers of Mexican descent) evident in my interviews is related to the larger social construction of Mexican and Chicana motherhood, which is infused with Catholicism and Catholic values. *La Virgen de Guadalupe* is the patron saint of Mexico.[51] She is also a role model for Mexican and Chicana womanhood and motherhood

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[51] *La Virgen de Guadalupe* is the indigenous virgin who appeared to Juan Diego, a young indigenous boy who had converted to Christianity, on December 9 and again on December 12, 1531. A major basilica is built in Tepeyac Hill (which is now in a suburb of Mexico City) where she first appeared. The Virgen de Guadalupe holds a special place in the religious life of Mexico and her image has played an important

(Anzaldúa 1987; Fox 1983; Castañeda-Liles 2018). She is "the mother, the nurturer, the one who endures pain and sorrow [in silence], the one who is willing to serve" (Nieto-Gomez 1974:37). Part of being a "good woman" is to invest devotion, loyalty, and nurturance in the family at her own expense. In turn, she becomes *la mujer abnegada* (the self-effacing woman).

The image of *la madre* (the mother) as self-sacrificing and holy is a powerful standard to which Mexican and Chicana women are compared (Segura 1994). Mothers, therefore, are expected to be "superhuman beings" who "perform miraculous deeds on behalf of their families" (Hurtado 1998:398). Felipe, Rafael, and Angel revere their mothers for their courage, strength, and perseverance. They glorify them for the sacrifices they made and the hardships they endured while raising children in poverty. Their mothers successfully raised their families on their own *("nos saco adelante")* in a society that does not socially or economically support female-headed households. They place their mothers on pedestals and they are ashamed of the moments when they were not the best sons. Overall, the family centeredness—*familismo*– that characterizes Mexican and Chicana/o cultures rests on the idealization of motherhood. On the surface level, this suggests the valorization of women. Further analysis, however, suggest that Mexican and Chicana mothers carry a particular "burden of representation" (Yuval-Davis 1997)– a laborious feat to maintain the family and culture intact. Consequently, the passing of a mother can engender drastic life changes (as in Felipe's case) or it can be an opportunity to outwardly express emotional pain as it was in Santos' case.

The only time Santos, a 38-year-old working-class second generation Mexican-American, cried during our interview was when he spoke about his mother who had passed away recently.

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role as a national symbol of Mexico. See Villalpando (2004) *La Virgen de Guadalupe: una biografía;* Zires (1994) *Los mitos de la Virgen de Guadalupe. Su proceso de construcción en el México pasado y contemporáneo.*

He considers her passing as the most difficult experience he has had as a father because her death was the first time his children "saw me crying. Seeing me breakdown and not being able to handle my shit […] being weak." Although his father was present in his life, he would often leave for days for work, leaving his mother to take care of the children by herself. Growing in a home that was organized around a traditional gendered division of labor, Santos' mother was the primary caretaker of the family while also working alongside his father in the informal paid sector. He fondly remembers how regardless of their home's financial situation, his mother never failed to have *"frijoles"* ("beans") on the stove for them.

Gabriel, a 47-year-old third and fourth generation Chicano, attributes his desire to have children to being raised mainly by women. Due to the work demands of his profession, his father was largely physically absent, so Gabriel "was raised by *mujeres* and I think there was something about that which made me very sensitive and comfortable with femininity, which men can have." He also maintains that women have influenced his life more so than men. When he was 16 years old, Gabriel "became a bit more [sexually] active," which worried his mother. Although his father had "the talk" with him, he was on tour at that time so he was not able to have second conversation with Gabriel. One day, when Gabriel was in the car with his mother, she decided to address the issue head on:

> "*Mijo*, you need to go buy condoms." And I was like, "Don't! Don't talk to me about that!" and she was like, "Why? It's important if you're going to be sexually..." and I'm like "stop talking about it!"

His mother, however, would not stop talking about the issue. Gabriel was "so in shock" that he got out of the car when they reached a stop sign and he walked back home. Now, looking back at that moment, he believes "it was a barrier breaker" regarding which parent can have the conversation about sexuality with children. Fathers do not have to be the *only* ones who talk to

their sons about sex and mothers do not have to be the *only* ones who address the issue with their daughters. His mother's openness has shaped Gabriel's father identity as an "open communicator" and he has honest conversations about sexuality with his children, especially with his daughter.

Three years prior to our meeting, Gabriel's mother died of a brain aneurysm. For him, "the most difficult experience as a father was experiencing loss in front of my kids." As the only son in the family, Gabriel's sisters and father gave him the responsibility to administer the morphine to his mother in order to make her comfortable during her last moments. The night that his mother passed away, Gabriel called his ex-wife:

> I told her come pick up the kids and I did that because I knew this is going to happen and she is going to pass and I knew that I was going to give her those shots and I did not want my kids to see me do that.

Fear informed his parenting that night. He feared that his children were going to be mad at him for giving their grandmother the morphine that would help her die comfortably and he "knew that I wasn't going to be able to cry" if his kids were present. Unlike the rest of his immediate family, Gabriel was not able to say good-bye his mother or mourn her death as it was happening since he was administering the medicine and on the phone with medical personnel. Two months after his mother's passing, Gabriel was finally able to cry.

For the majority of my respondents, mothers are considered sacred because of their devotion to their families. Due to the gendered division of labor in the home, mothers are involved in every aspect of children's everyday lives. For respondents who were raised by single mothers, their identity is very much tied to the women who raised them. Mothers are also mentors who respondents sought when they needed parenting advice. During my interviews, I asked respondents if they ever sought parenting advice from their fathers and overwhelmingly

participants indicated that for such matters, they preferred asking their mothers over their fathers because their fathers were not involved in childcare. The socialization of motherhood as natural which is interconnected to the gender expectation that women are inherently nurturing drives this "preference."

The Socialization of Motherhood as Natural and Fatherhood as Work

After 10 years of trying to conceive a child, Gerardo and his wife adopted a newborn son who is now five years old. His wife had several miscarriages during this ten-year period which devastated them because they really wanted to have children. Gerardo, a 49-year-old middle-class Chicano, felt that his "mom really prepared me with the skills to be a parent." Although he recognizes his father's contributions, Gerardo's mother was the one who was "day-in and day-out with me, nurturing me." Unlike his childhood home which was structured along gendered lines, Gerardo and his wife "have a strong value of being co-parents *as much as you can*, right. Because [my son] *naturally* gravitate[s] towards mom."

Aye, there's the rub. Gerardo's testimony illustrates a key process by which gender inequality in the family is reified: the naturalization of motherhood. Although Gerardo values co-parenting and participating in the caregiving of his son, there is a limit ("as much as you can") because children "naturally" gravitate towards their mothers. The fact that scholars and policy makers talk about "involved fathering" but not "involved mothering" points to the naturalization of motherhood and the "un-naturalness" of fatherhood, making involved fatherhood into an "achievement" (or into "achieved parenting") while motherhood is denied such achievement. Motherhood by definition is involved and fatherhood is not, hence the added adjective.

Like fatherhood, motherhood is a historically constructed ideology.[52] Since the publication of Chodorow's (1978) *The Reproduction of Mothering*, feminist scholars have provided us with basic insights and diverse theoretical positions that informs our subsequent thinking about motherhood *and* fatherhood. Specifically, they have produced a wealth of scholarship on the ideological construction of motherhood and the social, political and economic effects on women (Bobel 2002; Collins 1990; Correll, Benard and Paik 2007; Dow 2019; Garcia Coll, Surrey and Washington 1998; Glenn, Chang and Rennie Forcey 1994; Rothman 1989; Ruddick 1989; Villalobos 2014). For example, Rothman (1994) theorizes that U.S. motherhood rests on three deeply rooted ideologies: patriarchy, capitalism, and technology. In a patriarchal society, motherhood is what "mothers and babies signify to men" (140). The shift from children as workers to children as commodities and the change in the family form from a unit of production to a unit of consumption underlie the relationship between motherhood and capitalism. Lastly, the ideology of technology is invoked when "we think of our relationships with our children as a job to be well done" (144).

In *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*, sociologist Sharon Hays posits that the contemporary cultural model of socially appropriate mothering is based on the ideology of "intensive mothering." Intensive mothering is a gendered ideal that advises mothers to expend a tremendous amount of time, energy and money in raising their children. In a society motivated by self-interested gain, the existence of this cultural logic of unselfish nurturing is contradictory.

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[52] An ideology is the conceptual system by which a group makes sense of and thinks about the world. It is a collective rather than an individual product. Groups develop ideologies which are extracted from experience, and, because their experiences differ, so do their ideologies.

Hays argues that the paradoxical persistence of the ideology of intensive mothering ultimately serves the interests of patriarchy, capitalism, the state, middle-class, and whites.[53]

Gerardo recognizes that motherhood ideologies like intensive mothering place a burden on women and they absolve men because “men can check out.” Based on what he has seen with his wife, Gerardo is aware that women experience “guilt and shame” for being professional working mothers and how fathers can, unconsciously, take advantage of this when it comes to who does the reproductive labor in the home. On several occasions, Gerardo has had to tell his wife that she does not have the be the one to hold their son when he is crying, feed him when he is hungry, bathe him when she’s tired or change his dirty diaper because he can do it too and it is also his responsibility. He is intentional about doing this because:

> As a man and as a father, I need to continue to be held accountable […] because all the shame, guilt, sexism and patriarchy that is put on women means that *I* can be excused.

In Gerardo’s perspective, men need to “*fight* to hold up [their] end of the bargain” because patriarchy makes it is easy for them to “check out.”

Alfonso, a 35-year-old middle-class Salvadoran, also remembers a moment where he had to work to feel like a parent. For the first six months of his son’s life, his wife breastfed him until her leave expired and she had to return to work. At that time, Alfonso went on family leave for six weeks. At first, Alfonso struggled to feed his son who was rejecting the bottle since he had been exclusively breastfed. Alfonso was “very nervous” and he thought “gosh, I'm gonna fail on my first day at this new job of being a dad on a full-time basis.” Until one day, when he was watching the reality television show, “Bachelor In Paradise,” he got his son and a bottle and just before he tried to feed him, Alfonso pleaded, "c'mon, [son], we have to do this.” He vividly

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[53] See Chapter 7: “Love, Self-Interest, Power, and Opposition: Untangling the Roots of Intensive Mothering.”

remembers that instant as “one of those things where he kinda just looked at me. I looked at him and I just popped [the bottle] into in his mouth and he started eating.” For Alfonso, it was “one of those monumental moments” because he realized, “cool, I can do this. I can take care of someone else besides myself.”

Although Alfonso had changed his son’s diapers, cleaned his spit up, burped him, and rocked him to sleep during the six months prior, he had never fed him. Feeding a baby may appear to be a minor accomplishment, but for Alfonso it meant so much more:

> My wife and my son had that *very intimate connection* because they were able to connect as she nursed him […] So for me, it was very important because I think that's a very intimate moment between a mom and a child. It is something that obviously for biological reasons, men cannot experience […] So for me it was very–I guess to a certain extent–intimate knowing that I was the one providing food for my son.

For Alfonso, feeding his son meant reaching a level of intimacy that only women can experience because of their bodies.[54] A major common assumption about breastfeeding is that it is a natural phenomenon–requiring little effort to do–that *all* women can do successfully (Blum 1999; Carter 1995). Men, on the other hand, are barred from this practice since it is considered a cultural standard of “exclusive mothering” (Blum 1999). Alfonso overcame a biological obstacle and successfully fed his son making him feel like a father for the first time. He “provided” in a different way from which he was accustomed.

In her interviews with “natural mothers,” Bobel (2002) documents how the supreme importance placed on breastfeeding discouraged mothers from sharing infant feeding with

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[54] The discourse on infant feeding has been part of broader discourses concerned with the control of mothering. Social understandings of nature, science, women’s sexuality, and children’s needs are important components of the discussions surrounding breastfeeding. See Blum (1993) “Mothers, babies, and breastfeeding in late capitalist America: The shifting contexts of feminist theory” and Carter (1995) *Feminism, Breasts and Breastfeeding*.

fathers.[55] Over time, these feeding norms established caring patterns. Bobel writes, "when the mother is established as the singular food source, and furthermore, when nursing is the sole source of emotional security and comfort, the mother is constructed as irreplaceable" (134). On the other hand, fathers are imagined along a "continuum of helpfulness" (ibid). So while motherhood is naturalized, therefore passive, fatherhood is rendered as "un-natural"; as work, hence active. By depicting motherhood as natural, a patriarchal ideology of mothering locks women into biological reproduction. Women, therefore, are denied identities and selfhood outside of mothering and men are afforded other options with the exclusion of nurturing and caregiving. Along with breastfeeding, the social organization of hospital childbirth reifies the naturalization of motherhood.

The Social Organization of Hospital Childbirth

After 20 hours of labor, Iker's wife needed to undergo a C-section. Her heart rate fell and the baby's heart rate rose. Although her water had broken, she had not dilated enough, so the physician told them they could not wait any longer. Because she had a C-section (which is major surgical procedure), Iker, a 45-year-old middle-class Salvadoran, was able to "spend about an hour and a half alone with my son; with him sleeping on my chest." In several instances, the wives or partners of the Latino men I interviewed had physical and mental health problems due to complications during childbirth. These complications prevented mothers from achieving the ideal of "intensive mothering" (Hays 1996), which, in turn, enhanced men's degree of involvement with their children thus shaping their views of fatherhood. Like Iker, 17 other respondents noted that because their wives or partners had emergency C-sections, they had the

[55] Bobel (2002) conceptualizes "natural mothers" as mothers who reject almost everything that facilitates mother-child separation like baby-sitters, day care centers, and bottle feeding. They believe that "consumerism, technology, and detachment from nature are social ills that mothers can and should oppose" (1).

opportunity to hold their children first (before the mothers) after they were born. They noted the significance of that moment in helping them feel closer to their children. Being present at birth lays the groundwork for a father's relationship with his child. The social organization of hospital childbirth, however, presents men with a specific set of practices in the birthing room, impacting fathers' perceptions of their abilities to have close relations with their children.

Through the 1960s fathers were excluded from their children's births. While men were relegated to a hospital waiting room, they enacted the fathers' ceremony of childbirth: pacing the floor and smoking cigarettes in ritual isolation. The natural childbirth movement moved fathers from the waiting room into the hospital room (Reed 2005).[56] Men joined their partners to share the pleasure and help reduce the pain of birth. Forty years later, men are now expected in the birthing room. They have also been given active roles in labor and delivery. Men are "coaches," partaking in Lamaze classes with their partners, who guide and direct birthing women. As Reed (1996:1) notes, "with charts and manuals in hand, men use stopwatches to time their partners' contractions and help them breathe through labor and delivery." Samuel (whose testimony opened the chapter) took his role as his wife's coach very seriously. During the birth of his second daughter, he tried to guide his wife's breathing by breathing alongside with her, but he overwhelmed himself and he fainted.

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[56] During the late 1960s in the United States, heterosexual couples started to challenge the conventional birth model. With redefined attitudes about gender and marriage, these "maternity ward radicals" (Reed 2005:104) wanted to transform the birthing process from a strictly medical event into a natural, social, and spiritual affair. To meet this new demand, new methods of childbirth were developed and promoted by three reformers: Grantly Dick-Read in England, Fernand Lamaze in France, and Robert Bradley in the United States. Between 1930 and 1980 they developed techniques that many generations of parents have used. These practices are now popularly known as "natural childbirth." These reformers argued that society had created myths about birth as difficult and dangerous. This misinformation, they argued, caused fear and fear brings on pain and pain invites medical intervention. The birth reformers also argued that fathers are important to the birthing process by helping their partners manage pain. See Chapter 4: "Birthing Revolution: Men to the Barricades."

In *Birthing Fathers*, Reed argues that the hegemonic birthing ritual in the United States–which shapes and is shaped by hospital practices–distance fathers from their feelings and partners. Our birthing ritual relies on three cultural beliefs about the idealized U.S. man: men are rational, powerful, and in control.[57] Reed argues that changing essentialist hospital practices on childbirth which are directly influenced by the larger structure of gender relations can support fathers' birthing experiences. By relieving fathers of the responsibility for managing labor and delivery, they can focus on *their* birthing experience. Presently, fathers are still expected to be mothers' coaches. Yet, while fathers try to choreograph the birthing process, the medical establishment pushes back against them with technology and medicine, including C-sections. Not all fathers, though, are able to stand their ground when facing such institution.

Franco, a 62-year-old working-class Mexican father of five adult children, almost lost his wife during the birth of their fifth child, a daughter. His daughter was born prematurely via a C-section and she was the size of *"una botellita"* ("a small bottle") so she had to remain in the hospital. His wife was allowed to return home but, *"la señora estaba más mala que la niña"* ("the woman was sicker than the girl"). His wife was ill for many months because of a botched C-section: *"le hicieron cesárea y todo su estómago se le estaba pudriendo"* ("they did a cesarean section and her whole stomach was rotting"). Franco still needed to go to work because he needed to provide for their four other children. Luckily, a *comadre* who lived near was able to come and help Franco with the children while he worked and visited his wife in the hospital.[58]

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[57] During childbirth, men are forced to choose between the rationality and power of being coach and their capacity to be empathetic and nurturing in connection with mothers. By being their partners' coaches, men direct much of their efforts on power. They must focus on controlling themselves, their partners and the birth plan. A coach needs to remain rational since he must make decisions and act on them. The natural childbirth movement also taught U.S. men that they could protect their partners from fear and pain of birth, medical interventions by physicians and the demands of hospitals.

[58] *Compadrazgo* is a prominent feature of Chicana/o and Latina/o families, which is associated with behavioral familism. This refers to two sets of relationships with godparents who become "fictive" kin:

Interestingly, only Franco and another father noted the assistance of a family member in helping them manage the home and take care of their other children while their wives were recuperating from surgery. Presently, Franco feels a deep connection to his youngest daughter. Although he may disagree with his other children's choices or behaviors, he admits that it pains him more (*"me duele un poquito mas"*) when he is in conflict with his youngest daughter.

Alan, a 48-year-old father who identifies as biracial (Mexican and white), was the primary caretaker of his son during the first three years of his life because his wife went into psychosis and was heavily medicated. When Alan's second son was born, he recalls that his wife "wanted to have that relationship with that second child so badly that she almost kept everybody away from her relationship with him" which affected the type of relationship he had with his second child. Alan acknowledges a difference in his relationships with his two sons and he feels emotionally closer with his first-born.

Likewise, Diego, a 57-year-old middle-class Mexican-American father of two adult daughters, remembers the fear he felt when his wife gave birth to their first daughter. Their initial plan was to have the baby naturally, but complications during childbirth led to an unexpected C-section. Three days later, his wife had a second surgery because she developed an infection. While holding his newborn daughter, Diego started thinking:

> This could be it, something may happen to [my wife] and this might be *my* baby […] this kid is gonna totally depend on me. She needs me because I wasn't sure if I even had my wife on this deal.

For the first two weeks, while his wife recuperated from surgery, Diego was the primary caretaker of their daughter. Consequently, he "really bonded" with his first daughter and "we've

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padrinos and *ahiados* (godparents and their godchildren) and *compadres* (godparents and parents who become co-parents) (Falicov 1982; Griswold Castillo 1984; Segura and Pierce 1993; Williams 1990). Compadrazgo relationships with godparents create connections between families, thereby enlarging Chicana/o and Latina/o families.

been close ever since." Like Alan's wife, Diego's wife also felt cheated out of experiencing those first moments with their newborn so when she gave birth to their second daughter, she was overprotective of her time with their new baby. Their testimonies suggest that men's involved fathering is only acceptable if and when it does not infringe upon women's intensive mothering. So when men appear to be supersede the expectations that we have of fathers, mothers feel cheated or threatened. Unlike those who profess that fatherhood is in "crisis" because of women and feminism (Blankenhorn 1996), I do not blame individual mothers or the feminist gains over the last fifty years for men's degree of involvement in their children's lives. My intention is to hold structure accountable for this tension. The ideologies of involved fathering and intensive mothering are at odds. In all of the cases where fathers had to "step in" to take care of their children because their wives were physically unable to do so, they developed a very close connection with their child and their perceptions of their capacity to take care of their children altered the division of labor in their home.

Celestino, a 30-year-old middle-class third generation Latino, and his wife had a difficult time conceiving. After receiving a false positive which was "emotionally wrecking," they were finally able to get pregnant. Their first child–a daughter–was born prematurely via C-section. For Celestino, this experience was "emotionally draining" because he "would just cry every day because we couldn't have her home." Even more stressful was the fact that they could not hold their daughter since the doctors "put her in an incubator and we were only able to hold her hand for the first two days." For Celestino and his wife, "the whole birthing experience [of their daughter] was just traumatic." The birth of their second child–a son–was also difficult. Their son was born five weeks early and although Celestino was concerned, he felt more prepared to tackle the challenges of having a child born prematurely. He was *more* concerned about his wife who

developed bronchitis after having a second C-section and was in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for a month. For Celestino, the births of his children have impacted the quality of his relationships with them:

> I think the second time around I was more involved because with [my daughter] I had to work full-time; I was going to school full-time and it was hard for me emotionally during that time because I wasn't around very much and I missed some of her milestones. Like I missed her first steps, I missed her crawling, I missed her first word- it was so hard for me the first time around.

On the other hand, Celestino did everything for his son for the first month because his wife was very sick in the ICU. He would "do all the feedings, all the changings" and his son soon became his "little buddy." Celestino reflects on these different experiences:

> It's weird because [my daughter] didn't cry for me as much because she wanted her mom. [My son] wants me; it's weird. It's like a weird feeling. I don't know, I feel like, 'oh, he wants me.' He's just- I feel so appreciated [respondent laughs] and I feel so loved.

Celestino feels more appreciated and loved by his son than by his daughter because he was the primary caregiver of his son since his wife was physically not able to care for him. Currently, there is little support for the argument that an early and specific infant-father bonding period significantly affects the baby's future reaction to the father. There is growing interest, however, in the possibility that the entire birthing process has long-term implications on fathers' reactions to their child (Jones 1981). My interview findings aid this growing interest. My conversations with Latino fathers suggest that this specific bonding period has significant ramifications on their *perceptions of their own capability* to nurture and care for a child without having to rely on another person. They realize that they can "do it"–they can do fatherhood. They can be successful in overcoming supposed biological impediments. This is one way in which the "un-naturalness" of fatherhood can be surmounted.

Proving Fatherhood: Divorced and Separated Fathers in Family Court

Eleven of the respondents interviewed are either divorced or separated from the mothers of their child(ren). Reasons for their divorce are varied, from infidelities to the fact that they were constantly fighting with their spouses and partners. Due to the naturalization of motherhood, their separations or divorces had significant implications on respondents' fathering by limiting their access to their children. For example, Rafael, who I introduced earlier, was very upset when he learned that his ex-wife was cheating on him with a person she met on Facebook. However, he was even more upset when she served him divorce papers at his place of work. During the divorce proceedings, Rafael maintains that his ex-wife *"me quitó casi todo lo que tenía en el banco* ("she took almost everything I had in the bank"). His ex-wife was also awarded most of the custody over their son. Their relationship since then has remained strained. At the time of the interview, Rafael had not seen his son for two months and he believes that his ex-wife is discouraging his son from seeing him. On numerous occasions, a number of family members have advised him to get a lawyer to fight the current custody arrangement, but Rafael refuses to do so. He claims, *"no me gusta hacer eso porque es un daño para los hijos"* ("I do not like doing that because it harms the children").

Gonzalo, a 42-year-old second and third generation middle-class Chicano, and his girlfriend separated five years after their son was born. He characterizes his relationship with her as "work in progress." He believes the struggles in their relationship stems:

> From us not really having a really solid foundation in the beginning. We weren't a long-term couple. You know, we didn't get married, it wasn't anything that we planned, we hadn't dated for very long before I found out she was pregnant.

They lived together for the first five years after their son was born and "it got to the point where we just couldn't live with each other anymore." When Gonzalo and his girlfriend separated, "it

was a nasty fight. It was really about who can control more and child support became a big issue […] and it has continued to be a fight." They tried to take co-parenting classes and create a schedule that allowed each of them 50 percent, but these attempts quickly became futile. They "had to go a few times" to Family Court so that Gonzalo can have shared custody of their son.

When a child's parents are unmarried, as in Gonzalo's case, the statues of most states require that the mother be awarded sole physical custody unless the father *takes action* to be awarded custody. Moreover an unwed father cannot win custody over a mother who is a good parent. In the State of California, without a court order, a father has no legal right to see his child and any informal agreements between parents are not recognized by the court. The only recourse for unmarried fathers is to seek court orders that will recognize and protect their rights to child custody and visitation (California Courts 2020). These legal arrangements reify the socialization of motherhood as natural and fatherhood as work.

Gabriel, who I also introduced earlier, and his ex-wife divorced after eight years of marriage. The struggle for custody of their two children, however, lasted two years. Gabriel describes the first seven years of their marriage as loving, but "it was probably about the second year that I was home with my daughter, that [my wife] started to resent the bond that I was having with her." Gabriel was doing all of the things that mothers usually do with their daughters, like braiding their hair, buying their outfits, spending time with them. At the same time, Gabriel was financially providing for their family since he was working from home. His ex-wife started to resent Gabriel because "in order to make ends meet on her end, she had to work so much harder." Gabriel now understands that "the workplace is not an equal place" and he recognizes that her resentment came from the fact that "she is putting way more work and having to work so many more hours in more strenuous conditions" whereas he had a similar job

and "it was so easy and it was so flexible and I know now that's because I am a man, even though my boss was a woman." His ex-wife was "angry" because "she felt like somehow I had stolen that from her… the bond with the kids"–echoing other respondents' whose interactions with their children were framed as encroaching upon the mother-child bond. At that time, though, Gabriel admits that his reaction to his ex-wife's resentment and the divorce was "probably not as sensitive as it could have been. I just kind of felt attacked at that time."

During the first three months of the divorce proceedings, Gabriel and his ex-wife agreed to a schedule that allowed each of them to have three days out of the week with their children and they would rotate the seventh day every week. After weeks of following this schedule, Gabriel was surprised when he "got the summons from a processor and I read this thing and she had gotten a lawyer and they were playing really crazy hardball" like asking Gabriel to undergo a psych evaluation and drug testing because he followed indigenous spiritual practices. On the day of the hearing, Gabriel recounts what the judge said before he awarded him 51 percent custody of his two children:

> I remember the judge said something that made me feel–it's probably one of the reasons why I did this interview–he said [to his ex-wife and her attorney], 'you know, you have a father who wants to be a part of their kids' lives and shame on you for trying to take that away in the age that we live in.'

Gabriel took the judge's words to heart and "it made me socially aware about how easy this can happen to any father." Gabriel later revealed that the judge awarded him more custody because of his ex-wife's heavy workload. Framing involved fathers as "exceptional," like the judge did in Gabriel's custody hearing, draws attention away from the social forces that undermine paternal involvement (e.g., financial insecurity and gendered ideologies on parenting) and directs social criticism on women, labeling them as "selfish," "combative," and "unreasonable." Moreover, the

judge chastised Gabriel’s ex-wife for working too much whilst also demanding the majority of custody of their two children. This is another example of how involved fatherhood and intensive mothering are at odds. Gendered ideologies are present in child custody hearings. At the same time that women are told that they “can have it all,” they are also told by institutions like family court that they cannot citing their work commitments as possible interferences. This was also the case during Dante’s child custody arrangements.

Dante, a 37-year-old second generation Chicano, is the only respondent I interviewed who had full custody of his eight-year-old son. Dante and his ex-wife divorced two years after the birth of their son. He describes his relationship with his ex-wife as “a bit on the rocks” since they “walk on eggshells” around each other because “we haven't gotten over the fact that, you know, she wasn't happy and she left.” After learning about post-partum depression, Dante now realizes that his ex-wife was suffering from “the baby blues” which explained her behavior after she gave birth to their son. It has been difficult for Dante:

> To be taken seriously as a dad because there's still that stigma […] I almost have to prove that I'm a functioning dad, that I'm not the dumb dad, you know, that I’m not giving mom a break.

Although Dante proved his fatherhood in court, he has to constantly prove his fatherhood with his colleagues at work and with school personnel. Other fathers echo Dante’s frustrations at being undermined as a father. People’s assumptions about them “giving mom a break” suggests the agency of fathers in taking care of their children and sustains the gendered traditional division of labor in which mothers are not agentic because taking care of children is what they are supposed to do.

Respondents also indicated that the dissolution of their partner relationships compelled them to be more involved with their children. Participants learned to appreciate their time with

their children since they only had them for a limited time without the presence of another adult. Since they do not see their children every day, they have to talk more with their kids to know what is going on in their lives which differs from when they were partnered. For example, Gonzalo, who I mentioned earlier, recognizes that child custody negotiations have placed "a little bit more of a burden on me and how I use my time." Gonzalo grew up in a home that was also organized around gendered lines where his dad was mostly unavailable leaving his mother in charge of raising him and his two siblings. This is not the case for Gonzalo, "so my world completely revolves around [my son]." Gonzalo organizes his home and work schedules so that "they are based on whether or not it's going to impact my time with my son." For example, every other week on his days off, Gonzalo volunteers at his son's school and is active in the school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

Felipe, who I also mentioned earlier, characterizes his relationship with his two sons in phases: "*Yo creo que yo viví dos etapas con mis hijos. Una, estando dentro [de un matrimonio] con mi esposa y ahora que estoy separado"* ("I believe that I have lived two stages with my children. One, being in [a marriage] with my wife and now that I am separated"). He admits that when he was married, he had a different orientation to fatherhood. As a married father he was primarily concerned with financial provision:

> *Que no les faltara nada a ellos ni a mi esposa y trabajar para tener la suficientes armas como para mantener ese hogar […] Yo creo que hoy, Dios me ha enseñado como tener el amor de mis hijos–el tiempo… no es mucho tiempo, pero el poco tiempo que pueda tener, creo que tenemos calidad.*
>
> That they and my wife did not lack anything and work to have enough resources to maintain that home […] I believe that today, God has taught me how to have the love of my children–the time… it is not much, but the little time I can have, I think it's of quality.

Although Felipe was heartbroken by the dissolution of his marriage, he has learned how to be more involved and appreciative of the time he has with his children from the divorce. Felipe has also relied on his spirituality to help him accept the new formation of his family. Strikingly, Felipe admits, "*hoy en día que estoy afuera del matrimonio, conozco más a mis hijos que cuando estaba adentro*" ("now that I am outside of a marriage, I know my children more than when I was inside").

During a discussion I had with a friend-colleague about my findings among divorced and single fathers, she asked me, "so, are you saying that divorce is good for involved fatherhood?" *Am I arguing that the dissolution of a heterosexual partner relationship is a positive force that compels men to be more involved and active in their children's lives?* I hesitate to credit divorce because in doing so, I would be holding individual mothers and fathers accountable for what is part of a larger structural issue. The shifts in family life, like divorce and single parenthood, are the consequences of social and economic dislocations (e.g., rising inequality, poverty, escalating state policies of social abandonment) rather than the cause (Gerson 2000; Stacey 1998). Feminist scholars have critiqued the family as a gendered, racialized, and classed institution that reflects the inequality that already exists in the larger society (Baca Zinn 1990, Risman 1998; Smith 1987; Thorne and Yalom 1982). Although respondents struggled with their divorces and separations, they also framed them as opportunities to become more involved in *all* aspects of their children's lives. Similar to fathers who had the opportunity to nurture their newborns after they were born, divorced and separated fathers discovered their capacity to be caregiving and nurturing.

Conclusion

Do men have faith in themselves to take care of their children, especially when they are infants? Anxieties about the imminent arrival of a child are common among men and women. After all, the arrival of a child signals a new stage in life. But for my respondents, the anxiety about becoming fathers was partly based on their own perceptions of whether they can take care of their children by themselves. It was not until social circumstances like childbirth complications or divorce that disrupted the gendered traditional division of labor that men found themselves caregiving alone, developing a new confidence in their fatherhood shaping their current relationships with their children.

In this chapter, I have argued that the socialization of motherhood as natural drives the socialization of fatherhood as work. Fathers' anxieties about their paternal competence are eased when they feel they have overcome obstacles that are *inherent* to fathering. The sacredness of Latina mothers is part of the larger social construction of Mexican and Chicana motherhood. Imbued with Catholic values, *La Virgen de Guadalupe* is the standard to which women and mothers are held accountable. This idealization, though, leaves little room for other possibilities of being, thus rendering women as innate caregivers and nurturers for their families; something that men have to compete with. Hegemonic ideologies on motherhood are essentialist and they shape the institutional practices in hospitals and family court. Medical interventions that leave mothers unable to care for their children puts men on the spot. Although they still feel anxious, they rise to the occasion boosting their faith in themselves. Respondents also shared examples of when they have had to prove, defend, and justify they fatherhood in front of the legal system. Some of the respondents still have to "fight" for their fatherhood outside of birthing rooms and courtrooms. These various actions frame men's "involved fatherhood" as "achieved parenting" while motherhood is denied achievement. Motherhood and fatherhood are closely intertwined.

Fathers are now being held accountable to a different standard of manhood and fatherhood than what their fathers were held to because of the changing cultural attitudes about contemporary fatherhood. But contemporary discourses on motherhood have not changed to the same degree as the discourses on fatherhood. Moreover, institutional practices have not followed suit. So what does this mean for men's parenting? Following this chapter, I will discuss the scholarly implications of the present study and I will point to potential arenas for intervention.

VI. Conclusion: What about the "Deadbeat" Latino Fathers?

Whenever I give a public presentation on this research project, the most frequent question that I am asked is, "what about the absent (or 'deadbeat') Latino fathers?" I have two issues with this question. First, I am frustrated by this question because the only story we tell ourselves about Latino fathers is a pejorative one. When we think about Latino fathers, we often think about men who have a rigid allegiance to patriarchal norms, who value paid work over education, who actively discourage their daughters from pursuing their academic and professional goals, and who are reluctant to be caring, nurturing, engaging fathers because of a "culturally essential" desire to be the authoritarian, distant, patriarchs in their families. Another "controlling image" (Collins 2000) of Latino men is that they are *"mujeriegos"* ("philanderes") or "Latin lovers." Due to the relationship between masculinity and fatherhood, such image of Latino men leads us to generalize them as men who have children with multiple women *("dejando hijos regados*") and who do not have a relationship with any of them. This generalization is especially applied to immigrant Latino men who are thought to have families on both sides of the border.

Although the concept appears to be race neutral, the characterizations of "deadbeat dads" are racialized in the popular imagination, reinforcing the belief that fathers of color are to blame for the problems in their communities (Randles 2020). These assumptions are embedded in the questions I am asked during presentations or in the comments students make when I teach on Latino men and Latina/o families. At one public event, I responded to this question by saying, "can we just talk about the *other* Latino fathers for one moment?" *Fathering Ideals* complicates our understandings of father involvement through the vantage point of Latino men. Turning away from deficit understandings of fatherhood that emphasize what fathers lack and do not do

for their children, this dissertation highlights how social and economic constraints can undermine the best fathering intentions.

My second issue with this question about absent Latino fathers is its lack of clarity. What do we mean when we draw on these concepts of paternal absence, presence, and involvement? Is there a clear line between absence and presence? We are seduced by the involved father ideal in which men are not just breadwinners, but are nurturing, caring, and involved fathers. We are desperate to believe in this ideal because we want to believe that we, as a society, are one step closer to achieving gender equality. I have to admit that I was also seduced by this "new fatherhood" model. Our cultural ideals about parenthood and families, however, are impossible to realize because of social inequality. Which group of fathers is in a better position to achieve these ideals? Which group is at a disadvantage? Are translational fathers who leave their families to go to work in a foreign country for long periods of time, absent (thus uninvolved) or involved fathers (because they left to work in order to provide for their families)? Are non-residential fathers (fathers who do not live with their children) automatically excluded from this newly constituted father ideal since fathering is mostly considered within the context of a traditional nuclear family? The stories of the Latino fathers who I interviewed disrupt the involved/absent binary. Their stories also illuminate how men who are structurally marginalized employ culturally and class-specific strategies to accomplish their fathering ideals.

Moreover, in a culture which glorifies individualism and "free choice," father absence is assumed to be a choice– men choose to not be involved in their children's lives and they choose not to pay child support. Recent research, however, challenges this supposition. According to Randles (2020:19), "the stereotypical image of the deadbeat dad presumes absence, neglect, and deliberate disengagement without accounting for the numerous obstacles marginalized fathers

face." Obstacles such poverty, homelessness, substance addiction, unemployment may cripple men's abilities to be involved fathers to the points where they may believe their absence is in the best interests of their children.

Interestingly, the individuals who asked about absent Latino fathers were individuals who grew up without their fathers or whose fathers' presence was limited. The answer to this question was important to them, intellectually *and* personally. They saw part of their lives in my research. After my talks, many of them approached me to chat about their relationships with their fathers or why their fathers' absence mattered to them. Their stories were similar to the ones my participants shared with me. At that point, I realized that the motivation behind this question is the same motivation my participants have to "not reproduce the wheel" and to understand the contexts in which men make the choices they make regarding their children and their families. In this conclusion, I return to the initial queries about work, childhood, masculinity, and motherhood. In doing so, I also summarize the dissertation's findings and address some broader implications of a study on Latino fathers for fatherhood and family life more generally.

Fatherhood Class Cultures

Many Latino fathers referenced an "old school" father ideal-type, which, many argued, characterized their fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other older men in their lives. Participants claimed that "back in the day," Latino fathers were exclusively financial providers, held "traditional" attitudes about men's and women's roles in the home, were harsh disciplinarians (particularly to their sons), drank a lot, and were emotionally inaccessible. They referenced this previous ideal to situate their own enactments of fatherhood as more progressive, involved, and humane and to document intergenerational social change. They stressed new characteristics defining the ideal Latino father: balancing work and family, not having "too many" kids, being

active in their children's lives (especially their education), being attentive to their children's mental health, being emotionally expressive and accessible, having greater communication with their families, incorporating Spanish and other Latina/o/x cultural traditions, and using alternative methods of discipline. The majority of fathers, however, cannot successfully achieve the new Latino father ideal due to structural impediments. Consequently, Latino fathers employ diverse, class-specific, strategies to try to accomplish an idealized classed notion of fatherhood. These strategies are evident in how Latino fathers navigate family life and negotiate tensions between the ideals they wish to achieve and the reality of social inequality which impedes these efforts. Ultimately, these strategies do not challenge gender inequality as fathers continue to invest in masculinity and paternal essentialism in order to justify their need to be involved fathers.

Working for Respectable Fatherhood

Despite Latino men's high participation in both the U.S. and California labor markets and low unemployment rates, Latino men are more likely to work in low-wage occupations and industries, earn less, and live in poverty compared to non-Latino men. Although all fathers are now being encouraged to "mother" (Doucet 2016), breadwinning is still seen as a fundamental part of fatherhood. Men still have to work and the ability to father is based on their place in the labor market (Orloff and Monson 2002).

Therefore, I argued that work enables Latino fathers to be good providers, but detracts from accomplishing an involved fathering ideal. Work enables their fathering, through financial provision, as they are able to provide their families a middle-class life while, simultaneously performing appropriate masculinity. On the other hand, hyper-employment depletes fathers' time and energy and in the case of transnational fathers, work physically removes them from the home

for extended periods of time. The majority of fathers realize that work also prevented them from getting to know their *own* fathers in a deep, intimate way. This realization drives those able (mostly college-educated, professional, Latino fathers) to adjust their work commitments or schedules to make time for their families.

I also discussed how some Latino fathers use men's commitment to paid employment as a way to monitor other Latino men's fatherhoods. Specifically, many middle-class, professional working fathers (especially educators) who had access to parental leave and greater work flexibility were critical of fathers who were not visibly invested in taking care of children or did not attend parent events at school. Therefore, Latino fathers are caught in an interactional "bind" (Ridgeway and Krichelli-Katz 2013): financial provision makes for a good father, but overworking (due to the racial wage gap and labor market segregation) makes for a neglectful one.

Remembering Childhoods

Latino fathers' accounts about their childhood and the challenges they now face with their own children underscores the social construction of childhood. The Latino fathers in my study alleged that they were denied a childhood, an issue that compels them to value the "pricelessness" of their children. The ability to produce this experience of childhood for their own children, however, is mediated by race and class. I discussed how Latino fathers' childhood experiences relating to work, discipline, and sexual violence challenge the social construction of an ideal U.S. childhood, particularly boyhood. I also assessed how Latino fathers' understandings of their childhoods influence their sense of self-worth and their faith in themselves as good fathers.

I found a struggle between Latino fathers' desires to give their children a "normal" childhood alongside fears of spoiling their children. Latino fathers negotiate this tension by reminding their children about their family's history of intergenerational mobility. Immigrant fathers draw on their life experiences in Mexico and El Salvador in order to show their kids that their childhood in the United States is not universal. Undocumented immigrant fathers draw on their documentation status to convey the privilege of citizenship to their U.S.-born children. Moreover, fathers with a Chicano political consciousness aim to pass on the value of speaking for others when they cannot speak for themselves onto their children. Dovetailing Lareau's (2003) conceptualization of childrearing logics, I theorize Latino fathers' childrearing strategies as *the concerted cultivation of natural growth*, which they deploy to mediate the contradictions between longing for the "pricelessness" and the morning the "idleness" of their children.

The Men Our Fathers Were

In the third substantive chapter, I examined how fatherhood is a masculine performance. Fatherhood is the connection between succeeding generations of men and when men become fathers, they are forced to reconsider and reevaluate their own fathers. I explored how Latino fathers are forced to reevaluate their own fathers in light of changing cultural ideologies. Their reevaluations of their own fathers, and other father figures, expose a continuum between two extremes: reverence and resentment. Some participants recalled loving relationships and pleasant interactions with their father figures that involved mutual respect, admiration, and trust. Others remembered hating their fathers growing up, characterizing their relationships as turbulent, involving fear and violence. Many experienced both. Nuanced expressions of idolization and hatred, fulfillment and longing, *respeto* (respect) and indifference, forgiveness and condemnation exist and they change over the life course.

Respondents' stories about their fathers also reveal a larger issue about men's intimate relationships with other men. Respondents share their desires to be close to other men, but they also fear other men. Fear and shame prevent men from being vulnerable in front of other men and these are the prices men pay in order to maintain domination over women and other men. This is why many respondents felt closer to their mothers (or other female extended family members) than their male relatives.

Mothers, Childbirth, and Custody

Finally, I proposed that to understand fatherhood, we must engage motherhood and the social forces that shape it. Respondents shared that they learned how to "father" from their mothers and they spoke about how the mothers of their children openly challenged their gender biases in their parenting, especially in regards to their sons. But more importantly, throughout our conversations, respondents constantly framed fatherhood as something they needed to "accomplish," "prove," and "defend" which, they claimed, differed for the mothers of their children. The conceptualization of fatherhood as agentic is informed by contemporary hegemonic ideologies on motherhood which frame motherhood as natural to women.

I argued that the naturalization of motherhood drives these fathers to frame fatherhood as "work." I showed this through an examination of men's experiences of childbirth and custody hearings. I discussed how the sacralization of Latina mothers and respondents' observations of their mothers' experiences of gender oppression influence their understandings of themselves as men, spouses, and fathers. Paradoxically, this worked to reinforce the naturalization of motherhood that sustains inequality in family life. The meanings that fathers attach to fatherhood are shaped by their beliefs about whether they can be as competent in caregiving as they perceive mothers to be.

Fathering From the Margins: Centering Latino Fathers

Fathering Ideals challenges dominant perspectives of fatherhood in gender and masculinities research in two important ways. First, my analysis suggests a paradox about social inequality. Although Latino men's opportunities to be the traditional breadwinners in their families are hindered by racial and class inequalities, this enables them to expand their conceptions of fatherhood beyond economic provision by considering other strategies to accomplish their fathering ideals. I am not suggesting that the inequality Latino men face in the labor market and elsewhere is not worthy of concern. On the contrary, social inequality has devastating, long-term effects on them and their families' life chances and opportunities. I am only suggesting that inequality leads people to develop alternatives to make up the difference, even though the structural arrangements that produce inequality are left unaltered.

Second, it was difficult to pinpoint where the Latino fathers in my study stood regarding the traditional/involved fatherhood binary. The Latino fathers in my study define fatherhood in ways that merge traditional and involved fatherhood. They regard economic provision as one of the most important responsibilities they have as fathers. But, they also maintain that having an emotional connection with their children is important as well. Additionally, participants are mostly involved with their children via sports. Here, they are involved in their children's lives, but it is within the contours of a masculine space. Moreover, they shared how their definitions of fatherhood changed over time. The fathers who have older children and grandchildren in my study evoke this change. Fathers spoke about how rigid they were with their children when they were young, but relaxed as time passed. Scholars, therefore, need to move beyond the dichotomy of traditional fatherhood and involved fatherhood in order to understand how men negotiate

competing ideals of fatherhood, creating new ways of fathering and conceptions about masculinity in the process.

Fathering Ideals centers Latino fathers in fatherhood and masculinities research and establishes what Latino fatherhoods looks like today by paying close attention to the internal diversity and dynamism among Latino fathers. It is important to expand research on Latino fathers to learn how Latina/o families and their communities make sense of these cultural changes and meaningly negotiate their implications. Currently, we are facing several social and political crises that deeply affect Latina/o communities. Issues regarding immigration, economic inequality, environmental racism, criminalization and policing, and the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted the lives of Latinas/os. In a moment where there are “more pressing” social problems that need our attention, I have been tasked to make the case for why research on Latino fatherhood is important. History has taught us that change is the only constant. We are not going to be in a permanent in a state of crisis forever. Furthermore, fathers are still raising their children and supporting their families through this crisis. Their responsibilities and expectations do not fade away because of these circumstances. On the contrary, I argue that this is an opportune moment to study Latino fathers and how they and their families are managing, surviving, and thriving. So when the pendulum swings, we will be in a better position to understand and support these men, their families, and communities

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Appendix A: Profile of Research Participants

Name[59]	Age	Ethnicity[60]	Generation-Since-Immigration[61]	Relationship Status[62]	Highest Level of Education	Occupation
Jorge	58	Mexican	1	Married & Separated	5th grade	University Maintenance
Miguel	45	Mexican	1	Married	Middle School	University Dining
Ricardo	31	Mexican-American	2	Married	Bachelors	IT Consultant
Rudy	54	Mexican-American	4, 2	Married	Bachelors	Business Consultant
Javier	52	Latino	1	Married	6th grade	Construction
Cesar	71	Mexican	2	Married	Masters	Retired- Education Administrator & Substitute Teacher
Rafael	35	Mexican	1	Divorced	Middle School	Maintenance
Gabriel	47	Chicano	3, 4	Divorced	Bachelors & Teaching Credential	School Teacher
Victor	39	Mexican-American & Hungarian-American Jewish	3	Married	(2) Masters	School Principal
Octavio	51	Hispanic	1	Married	6th grade	On Disability-Distribution Center
Pedro	54	Latino	1	Married	6th grade	Construction
Angel	39	Latino	1	(Unofficially) Married	9th grade	Awards Manufacturing & Uber Driving
Cristian	71	Mexican	1	Married	8th grade	Retired-Construction
Saul	33	Latino	1	In a Relationship & Separated	High School Diploma	Cal Trans
Rogelio	46	Latino	2	Married	Juris Doctorate	Vice-Superintendent

[59] The names on this table are pseudonyms in order to protect the confidentiality of participants.
[60] Participants were asked to self-identify their ethnicity. Some participants self-identified using multiple terms.
[61] Participants may belong to two different generations.
[62] In relation to their child(ren)'s mother. Some participants may have multiple relationship statuses if they have children with more than one woman.

Benito	65	Mexican	1	Married	6th grade	Retired- Construction
Mátias	39	Latino & Native American	2, 3	Divorced	Bachelors	President of School Board & Starbucks Co. Executive
Marcial	30	Mexican	1	Married	High School Diploma	Construction
Celestino	30	Latino (Mexican & Colombian)	3	Married	Bachelors	Graduate Student Teaching Assistant
Natalio	58	Salvadoran	1	Married	Associates	School District Staff
Carlos	49	Mexican	1	Married	8th grade	Welding
Óscar	34	Chicano	2	Married	9th grade	Truck Driver & Mechanic
Lauro	42	Mexican	1	Married	6th grade	Electrician
Diego	57	Latino	2,3	Married	Masters	Superintendent
Samuel	49	Mexican & Indigenous	1	Married	Doctorate	Principal Adult Education Program
Andrés	51	Chicano	1	Married	Bachelors	Community Organizer & Artist in Residence
Dante	37	Chicano	2	Divorced	Some College	Non-Profit on Smoking Prevention
Mauricio	38	Hispanic	2	Married	Bachelors	Police Officer
Ramón	73	Chicano	1	Married	Doctorate	Retired- University Professor
Sebastian	57	Chicano	1	Divorced	Doctorate	University Administrator- Director of Multicultural Center
Gael	70	Puerto Rican	1	Married	Doctorate	University Professor
Benjamín	37	Mexican-American	2	Married	Associates	Staff- Publishing Company
Lucas	50	Mexican-American	2,3	Married	Masters	School Teacher
Santino	47	Hispanic	1	Married	Some college	Construction
Franco	62	Mexican	1	Married	6th grade	Aircraft Manufacturing
Nicolás	44	Salvadoran	1	Married	Masters	University Administrator- Dean
Aarón	50	Mexican Indian	3	Divorced	High School Diploma	Massage Therapist
Emmanuel	49	Mexican	1	Married	8th grade	Carpenter
Leonardo	25	Latino	2	Engaged & Separated	Associates	Construction & Bartender
Rodrigo	32	Mexican	1	Married	High School Diploma	Restaurant- Dishwasher

Bruno	50	Hispanic	2,4	Married	Masters	University Staff- Director of Campus Safety
Jerónimo	40	Latino	1	Married	High School Diploma	University Staff- Purchasing
Alan	48	Latino & Caucasian	2	Married	Bachelors	University Staff- Student Services
Axel	57	Mexican-Japanese-American	3	Married	Doctorate	University Professor
Patricio	62	Latino	3	Married	Bachelors	Retired- Advertising Executive
Marcos	52	Latino	1	Married	12th grade	Mechanic
Joshua	42	Chicano	4	Married	Some college	Non-Profit on Community Services & Resources- Director
Agustín	33	Mexican-American	2	Married	Bachelors	Handyman
Alfonso	35	Salvadoran	2	Married	Masters	University Staff- Director of Admission
Santos	38	Mexican-American	2	Married	Bachelors	School Program Supervisor & Uber Driving
Justino	72	Mexican	1	Married	10th grade	Day Laborer & Community Organizer
Horacio	66	Mexican	1	Married	6th grade	University Dining
Blas	37	Mexican	2	Married	Doctorate	School Principal
Gonzalo	42	Chicano & Latino	2,3	Separated	Bachelors	First 5 California- Program Coordinator
Darío	33	Chicano & Mexican American	4	Married	Masters	Graduate Student Teaching Assistant & Adjunct Lecturer
Iker	45	Latino	1	Married & Divorced	Some college	Corporate Executive- Senior Vice-President of Sales
Gerardo	49	Chicano	2	Married	Juris Doctorate	Non-Profit on Racial Justice- Associate Director of Program
Felipe	39	Mexican	1	Divorced	6th grade	Restaurant- Cook
Baltasar	37	Mexican	1	Married	High School Diploma	Construction
Efrain	34	Chicano & Latino	2	Married	Doctorate	Adjunct Lecturer

Appendix B: Methodological Notes

I conducted in-depth interviews with 60 Latino fathers in California from 2018-2019. Qualitative interviews were the appropriate method to collect data since I was interested in exploring and understanding participants' perspectives, meanings, and experiences. Interviews also allowed me to follow up or probe on unanticipated areas of inquiry, accounts of action, hints, or implicit views of my informants. Overall, qualitative interviews provided me the flexibility by probing as well as control by having an interview guide with a set of open-ended questions that I wanted to ask participants.

I recruited participants by: visiting public social spaces (e.g., parks and beaches) during weekends and holidays; attending public events (e.g., fairs and baby expos) that targeted families with children; and attending parent events at local public schools. I also crafted a recruitment flyer that I gave to potential participants when I met them. I also posted these flyers on community bulletin boards. I recruited participants mainly in the northern California county of Santa Clara, and the southern California counties of San Bernardino and Los Angeles, respectively. I worked with a non-profit organization in southern California that serves Latina/o families and the community-at-large, who facilitated my recruitment of fathers who attended their weekly events. They also allowed me to use their meeting space to conduct the interviews. I was also granted permission to recruit participants from a school district in southern California and a charter school in northern California.

Face-to-face interviews took place at convenient times and places for participants (e.g., coffee shops, community spaces, homes, and workplaces). I provided every respondent a consent form, in either English or Spanish, for them to sign before the interview began. I went over the consent form with each one of them and at the end, I asked them if they had any questions about

the form or the study. I collected the signed forms and I stored them in a locked desk drawer in my apartment office. I began the interviews by asking respondents twelve demographic questions regarding their age, birthplace, occupation, marital status, children, religious affiliation, and educational attainment. After this portion of the interview, I asked them twenty questions about their fatherhood experiences and their relationships with their families. The interviews lasted, on average, one hour and thirty minutes, and were conducted in Spanish, English or a combination.[63] All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of respondents. Respondents were offered twenty dollars for their participation. Twenty-five participants, however, declined compensation because they believed that it was their paternal responsibility to help a Latina student on her “school work.” After each interview, I immediately recorded my observations using my voice recorder once I was in my car. I described in detail the setting, the participant’s tone and mannerisms, and if the participant shared something that was similar to what previous respondents had shared. I later transcribed these notes and included them in my analytical memos.

I, along with two undergraduate research assistants whom I trained, transcribed the interviews verbatim. We used Transcribe by Wreally, an online transcription software, to transcribe the interviews. The verbatim transcripts averaged about 30 to 40 pages of single-spaced text. I read each interview five times, selectively coded potions, and then created computer files to bring the pieces of the interviews that addressed recurrent themes, layers within themes, and contradictions expressed by the respondents with regard to certain themes.

[63] My ability to write in Spanish is not as proficient as my speaking ability. Therefore, I sought help from Professor Francisco Lomelí in the Chicana and Chicano Studies Department at UC Santa Barbara. He carefully read and edited my Spanish interview schedule and questionnaire for diction, syntax, and grammar. I also sought his advice because I wanted to be conscious of the language that I use when asking my questions so that I do not offend nor discourage my participants from being open about their life histories with me.

Therefore, the ideas that I present in this dissertation were derived from the methods of grounded theory, meaning that while my research was informed by my knowledge of the literature on this topic, I concentrated on exploring the themes that emerged inductively from the interviews.

Reflexivity

My positionality as a young, college-educated, Latina woman informed my interactions with my participants in the interview setting. Previous scholars who have conducted studies on men have reflected on the effects of gender on the researcher-researched relationship. During her interviews with divorced men, Arendell (1997:347) observes how her participants were "both presenting themselves as masculine persons-defined by them as being competent, assertive, controlling, and rational- and working on proving their manhood during their conversations." Similarly, Schwalbe and Wolkmoir (2001) view the masculine self as both a problem and a resource in interview studies with men. To mitigate minimizing effects brought by masculinity, Lareau (2000) recommends eliciting some of the qualities that fathers provide for their families, such as laughter,[64] in order to create a more comfortable setting. For sociologist Jessica Vasquez-Tokos (2017), the intersection of age and gender shaped her interactions during her interviews with middle-class Mexican-American men. She suggests developing good rapport to overcome perceived age, gender, and class/educational differences.

My age, class position, and educational attainment shaped my interactions in ways that benefited my study. Although women scholars have historically experienced varying levels of harassment when doing research on men, I did not experience these issues because my

[64] In a project for a graduate seminar on qualitative research methods, I interviewed my father about his childhood and his relationships with my mom and sisters. After the interview, I asked him if he had any recommendations on how I can improve my interviewing skills for when I interview fathers in the future. He recommended that I be more relaxed, say a few jokes, and laugh so that fathers feel comfortable during their interview.

participants viewed the interview as an opportunity to perform the ideal of "the good Latino father." In other words, fatherhood protected me from the kinds of harassment women scholars experience in the field. The "good Latino father" performance is class-specific and one that adheres to cultural understandings about the family and the value of education. By engaging in these behaviors, I argue that participants were "fathering the researcher." Many participants saw the interview setting as an opportunity to help a young person of the Latina/o community in her educational pursuits. Contrary to public perception in the United States, Mexican men have a great deal of respect for women who go to college.[65] This is a reason why many did not accept compensation for their participation. I did not pose a "masculinity threat" (Schwalbe and Wolkmoir 2001) and respondents took this as an opportunity to talk to someone about their lives without the need to overcompensate or compete for control. Would I have received the responses I did if I were a Latino young man? Probably not.

During the initial interviews, I found myself crying with participants as they shared very intimate, often painful, and sensitive details about their lives. I became increasingly concerned that my emotional responses were tainting my "objectivity" and that I was crossing a an ethical and methodological line. After all, as a Latina who is researching Latinas/os, there is already an assumption that I am "too close" to the research subject and therefore, my analysis will be read as biased to some degree. I reached out to Gloria González-López for advice about the role of my emotions in my interviews with Latino fathers. She reminded me that feminist qualitative work gives us, researchers, the chance to be human. It is significant to have a human connection with the people with whom we work. My empathy towards my respondents, my human tears, is a way for me to connect with my respondents and they may appreciate the connection. I later found that

[65] Conversation with Gloria González-López, October 1, 2018.

the more engaged I was at the human level, the more Latino fathers were willing to open up to me about their lives, their successes, and their failures. I was authentically myself, sincere, and humble. Latino fathers responded well to me and some even pointed out that my humility made them feel safe to talk to me. I became their "witness" (Silva and Pugh 2010) and they felt seen and heard.

Ethical and Political Responsibilities in Knowledge Production

There are many individuals who have strong opinions about Latino men and Latina/o/x culture. When I spoke with a Chicano faculty member about my initial research topic, which was on the ways that Latino fathers raise feminist daughters, his immediate response was, "Aren't they all *machistas*?" Moreover, at a dinner party in December 2019, another retired Chicano academic pushed back on my research premise by suggesting that the only reason why Latino fathers are more involved is because Latina women have raised their standards and they now expect men to take care of their children. Although I discussed Latina women's role in Latino men's fathering in this dissertation (see chapter 5), I disagree with the assumption that Latino fathers do not have agency or that there are no other social forces that shape Latino men's fathering. Interestingly, the three most significant critiques I have received about the significance of my research have come from Latino male academics. Although frustrated, I am not surprised by these remarks because they reflect the prevailing negative perceptions of Latino men and Latino fathers. Latino men are often framed as "prisoners of culture," which also assumes that Latina/o/x culture does not change. There is more to Latino men and fathering that superficial, cultural, explanations. What I am surprised by is that these remarks are coming from other Latino men. This type of commentary worried me because it evoked the apprehension that continually loomed over my research and still does, which is my anxiety about the implications

of my representation of Latino fathers who shared so much about their intimate lives with me. Mainstream understandings about Latino fathers are so strong, that I found myself pondering on whether my analysis is right. Am I misinterpreting Latino fathers' responses? Is there actually something new about Latino fathers that my research contributes? My goal was to challenge and complicate stereotypical and one-dimensional understandings of Latino fathers, but I still ask myself, "who will read about Latino fathers?" and "how will this information be used and for what purpose?" I recognize that the results from this research can be misconstrued and used to once again, blame individual fathers, and families, for their shortcomings. Nonetheless, my hope is that in centering the voices of Latino fathers in this dissertation, we can recognize the remarkable value in speaking with and listening to them.